

**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN ENHANCING SCHOOL  
EFFECTIVENESS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

by

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at the

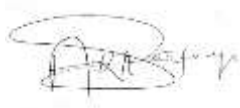
**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**MAY 2020**

## DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER

I, Alice Ayanda Kayakazi King, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided study, and that the thesis has not been previously submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, the thesis represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the University of South Africa.



30 April 2020

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Signature

Signed Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **DEDICATION**

This academic study is dedicated to:

My late parents, Reverend R. S. T. Songca and Mrs E. N. Songca, for always believing in me and providing me with the opportunities to achieve my goals. Ah! Xolo, Thuse, Dunywa, Ntamonde, Zotsho, Gqigqi kaLubanyana.

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**“Don’t quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion!”**

**~ Muhammad Ali**

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the study was to investigate participants' views on the role of school governing bodies (SGBs) in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools with a view to promoting learners' sustainable academic achievement.

The study was undertaken at ten (10) South African schools in the Western Cape \*Province in South Africa, in a metropolitan area. The study adopted the case study as the principal research design, and it was informed by the mixed methods paradigm; thus, qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used. Non-probability and probability sampling techniques were used for the selection of the site of study and the participants.

A representative sample of 189 participants was used from a target population of 567 participants. The study was informed by multiple theories. The study found that most of the participants perceived maladministration and mismanagement of the SGBs as a major problem affecting the governance in most public schools in South Africa. It was found that the adoption of a vibrant and robust school governance strategy is the solution/panacea to solving this persistent problem of a lack of proper governance in schools.

The introduction of a school governance education and regulatory framework for the SGBs was singled out to be the 'pivotal' strategy that policy-makers should adopt to strengthen the role of the SGBs. It was further established that the role of the SGBs in South African schools should be strongly supported by a multi-agency response to enhance the effective running of the education system to propel learners' academic achievement.

The study findings further revealed that the SGBs in South African schools lack the necessary assumed or anticipated knowledge regarding school governance. The study has the potential to contribute to the scholarly literature on how the SGBs can be supported to enhance effectiveness in South African schools and improved academic achievement. An analysis of global experiences and best practices revealed some new insights which could improve the functioning of the SGBs in South African schools. It also emerged that training trainers or educating teachers and other

stakeholders can help capacitate individuals and transform South Africa's basic education.

The study concluded that school governing bodies are an indispensable entity in education and require the necessary backing by multi-stakeholders. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen the local school governance strategies and support existing mechanisms currently being employed in South African schools to successfully provide an environment that supports learners' sustainable academic achievement.

In line with the above, the study recommends the resourcing of the SGBs to assist them in executing their mandate. In addition, the study recommends further research in this seemingly grey area to contribute to the knowledge body regarding instituting good school governance in South African schools.

### **Key Words**

School governing bodies, role, enhancing, school effectiveness, learners' sustainable academic achievement, black empowerment, apartheid era, post-independence era

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BEA	Bantu Education Act (of 1952)
DoE	Department of Education
EC	Eastern Cape (Province)
NC	Northern Cape (Province)
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RWJF	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
SA	South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996)
SETEA	South African Timeline of Education and Apartheid
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SRC	School Representative Council
WC	Western Cape (Province)
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Over the years, the South African education system has gone through several phases of reforms. During the apartheid era, the racial disparity in schools perpetuated social inequalities by limiting education for blacks, as prescribed by the Bantu Education Act (BEA) of 1952. Even though some control measures have since been put in place, such as the establishment of the school governing bodies (SGBs) as stipulated by the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996, the impact and resultant crisis of educational inequalities is still evident and even rampant. In order to address the imbalances faced by the South African schools, Asmal (2015:57) notes, “Challenging the past and moving beyond the legacy of apartheid is how the Department of Education (DOE) in South Africa plans to work towards social justice and equity, which has led to the introduction of the curriculum titled ‘Curriculum 2005’.”

In acknowledging the centrality of effective leadership in educational reform, Bush (2005:391) observes that there has been “great interest in educational leadership since the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. The stakeholders in education believe that the quality of education makes a tremendous difference not only to the learning outcomes and school improvement, but also to overall national development and global competitiveness. Based on such interest and the stated goals, one would expect to see drastic changes emerging in school governance in the post-apartheid era, but this has not been the case. Therefore, the primary aim of this study was to investigate the role of the school governing bodies in enhancing the effectiveness of public schools. It examined the reported differences between schools; how these schools were governed; and to what extent the stakeholders involved in education such as learners, teachers, parents, non-teaching staff, school management teams and the larger school communities, are affected by the challenges they face.

This introductory chapter provides a background to the study by highlighting the global, regional, and local situation of the schools’ governing bodies, and it identifies the knowledge gap that the current study attempts to close. Other critical components of the thesis covered in this chapter are the research problem, research questions, the

aim and objectives of the study, significance of the study, and the definition of the key terms used in the study. The chapter concludes by outlining the structure of the thesis.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Various studies on the SGBs have been conducted regionally, nationally and globally, and these have some bearing on the problem under investigation. This section gives an overview of the SGBs in South Africa, their mandate and functions.

### **1.2.1 School Governing Bodies in South Africa**

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA) states that an SGB is “a statutory body where parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and learners (starting from Grade 8 or higher) deliberate on issues, and work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the school community, and in that way enhance teaching and learning.”

Prior to 1994, the South African school governing structures varied considerably, and they “were known *inter alia*, as school committees, school boards, management councils and parent-teacher-learner associations (PTSAs)” (Karlsson, 2012:328). However, South Africa’s ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), realised the importance of having a standard, uniform and shared accountability and “democratic school governance structures in order to fully develop the potential of the human resources of the country on assuming the reigns of the government in 1994” (Bagarette, 2011:223). The reason for this democratic change and governance as espoused in SASA was to devolve the authority to schools, and empower the school governance and management structures, the principal, chairman of the SGB and other office bearers to lead and manage schools effectively. However, a lack of a clear demarcation of the roles of the SGB, where the decision-making is not shared, and a lack of opportunities for training caused a lot of confusion and frustration among the SGBs. It is worrisome that to this day, there are still some inequalities in terms of access to resources between the advantaged schools and historically disadvantaged schools. As Karlsson (2012:331) notes, “Some functions of SGBs are contingent on the social conditions of schools as well as the capacity differential of some SGBs.” The inconsistencies and inefficiencies in the capacities of different SGBs are constantly



associated with the previous apartheid regime, where the principals seemingly had absolute control of policy implementation and the general running of schools.

For the purpose of this study, the term 'predominantly white schools' refers to schools in which previously, more than 80% of learners were white. In the past, white schools performed much better than black schools, which indicates an educational and outcome inequality. Moreover, the level of exposure, confidence and benefits enjoyed by previously defined 'white' schools was superior to historically disadvantaged black schools, where there was less or no access to the essential resources. In an attempt to decentralise the governance in schools, Section 16 of the SASSA stipulates that the professional management of the school is the responsibility of the principal, whereas school governance is the responsibility of the SGBs (RSA, 1996b:21). This study explores socio-capital, networking, empowerment and equality theories in an attempt to study the phenomenon in depth, and develop some strategies that can improve school management approaches, their functionality and efficiency.

### **1.2.2 Global Perspective on the School Governing Bodies**

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2011:17), the challenges experienced by the SGBs are universal, even though different names are used in different countries to refer to the similar structures. In defining the role of the SGBs, the Essex County Council (2016:2) states that the SGBs are responsible for working with schools to ensure that they deliver quality education. Additionally, the SGBs are described as working together with the principal who is responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the school. In terms of this principle, the SGBs play an oversight, supervisory and regulatory role in schools. According to the Essex County Council (2016:2), the school governors have the following key functions. They are meant to:

- Ensure the clarity of vision, ethics and strategic direction;
- Hold the principal to account for the educational performance of the school, its learners, and the performance management of staff;
- Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its moneys are well spent.

These key functions highlight that the SGBs are a critical structure in the functioning of schools. In England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, school governors are the overseers of a school, and are entrusted with giving a school a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction (Haughes, 2014:2). According to the US Department of State (2018:5), the comprehensive roles and responsibilities of the SGBs are to:

- Determine the school's mission and purpose;
- Select the head of school;
- Support the head and assess performance;
- Ensure the provision of adequate resources;
- Assure the effective management of resources;
- Determine, monitor and strengthen the school's programmes and services;
- Enhance the school's public standing;
- Ensure the legal and ethical integrity, and maintain accountability;
- Recruit and orient members, and assess performance.

Although these functions are general and broad, their overall intent is to guide the SGBs in their responsibilities to promote the effective running of the schools in order to achieve optimal school functionality.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Although South Africa has several legislative and policy frameworks aimed at guiding the SGBs to perform their fiduciary and oversight roles effectively, research has shown that they continue to experience challenges such as lack of strong governance systems (Mahlangu, 2009:18; Singh, Mbokodi, & Msila, 2004:8). The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2016:12) states that the levels of mismanagement of schools have escalated because of a failure to establish effective governing bodies. According to Oakes (2015:288), the South African education system still shows that “dissimilar classroom cultures, different dissemination of knowledge, and unequal education opportunities are still experienced”, despite the establishment of governing bodies. The prevalence of a poor corporate governance in South African schools presents challenges to the Department of Basic Education as it fails to attain the strategic goals meant to promote quality education across all schools.

The SGBs are constrained by a myriad of factors that are political, economic and social in nature. Quan-Baffour (2006:10) sheds some light on some of the key areas of school governance when he contends that “since the governing body exercises its power in areas affecting the discipline, grievances, appraisals, promotion, recruitment, selection, and dismissal of teachers, the school governors therefore need to be familiar with legislation and government notices affecting personnel and labour relations.” This stated requirement is worrying because the SASA, which is intended to guide the functioning of South African schools, is often flouted in practice, while it seeks to uphold the values of good governance and administration in South African schools in order to promote their effectiveness. The SGBs are designed to promote and control all aspects that keep the best interests of the school in mind, and ensure the provision of quality education (Mabasa & Themane, 2012:150). Through the establishment of the SGBs, the South African Government adopted a multi-agency response in dealing with the factors constraining the effective management and running of schools. Herman (2013:13) aptly contends that the effectiveness of South African schools largely depends on the quality and efficiency of their SGBs. In order to bring the research problem into sharp focus, it was formulated in a question form below.

#### **1.4 THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION**

- **What is the role of school governing bodies in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools?**

##### **1.4.1 Sub-Questions**

To address the main research question adequately and guide the study, the following sub-questions were posed:

- In what ways do the school governing bodies strive to improve academic excellence in South African schools?
- What are the causes of existing disparities among the school governing bodies in South Africa?
- How can the Department of Basic Education equip the school governing bodies in order to perform their roles effectively?

- What strategies do the SGBs use to ensure proper utilisation of resources in order to improve learner achievement in historically disadvantaged schools?
- Why is it important for the SGBs to adopt policies that promote good corporate governance in South African schools?

## **1.5 RESEARCH AIM**

The main aim of this study was to investigate the role of the school governing bodies in enhancing the effectiveness of public schools in the Western Cape metropolitan area.

## **1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the objectives of the study were to:

- Explore ways in which school governing bodies strive to improve academic excellence in South African schools;
- Investigate the causes of existing disparities among the school governing bodies in South Africa;
- Examine measures that can be employed by the Department of Basic Education to equip the school governing bodies in order to perform their roles effectively;
- Evaluate the strategies that can be used by the SGBs to ensure proper utilisation of resources in order to improve learner outcomes/achievement in historically disadvantaged schools;
- Investigate the rationale for the SGBs' need to adopt policies that promote good corporate governance in South African schools.

This section made an attempt to expose the nature of the problem under investigation and provided the major research question of the study. The purpose and objectives have also been highlighted. The next section will focus on the rationale and motivation for undertaking the study.

## **1.7 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

My motivation to undertake this study was that I have been involved in the advisory services for the US Consulate for the past seven years, and over these years, I have developed a personal interest in contributing to the existing body of knowledge,

particularly the best practices issues related to the SGBs. This interest can be attributed to the fact that I am the Education Advisor of the US Department of State; and hence, I need to stay abreast of the current trends in the discourse and research on school governance and management.

In addition, I have witnessed incidents of maladministration in schools because of the dysfunctional SGBs. The implementation of good corporate governance in South African schools is left to the discretion of the school authorities and the governing bodies. Therefore, it is critical that school principals should explore ways that can empower and strengthen the SGBs in the performance of their governance duties so that they can assist schools to function more effectively.

The widespread prevalence of ineffective SGBs has become a major problem affecting the South African education sector, and not much research has been undertaken in this field. Many schools are dysfunctional due to maladministration, and ineffective governance and poor leadership. My personal aim is that the findings from this study will inform the relevant stakeholders such as the Department of Basic Education officials, school principals, teachers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on how to devise strategies that can empower the SGBs in South African schools to be more effective and efficient in their roles. Although the results of the study are not intended to be conclusive on the role of the SGBs, it is anticipated that the results can be complementary to the existing SGBs' policy framework and enhance school effectiveness. The next section will explore the benefits of the study to various stakeholders, including individuals and institutions, respectively.

## **1.8 CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH**

This study is expected to contribute a myriad of benefits to South Africa, particularly with regard to capacity development of the SGBs in the governance and management of schools and thus, help to improve the effectiveness of schools. Much has been studied about the critical role of the SGBs in school governance. However, so far, little attention had been paid to the role of governance and the ability of the SGBs to enact such governance. This study sought to bridge this gap by bringing new information on the role of the SGBs in enhancing the effectiveness of schools. The literature available

on the role of the SGBs in schools is often journalistic information from the media; hence, it was important to carry out this research within an academic context.

South Africa as a developing country has experienced challenges regarding the effectiveness of the SGBs. South Africa fails to perform its mandate of providing high quality education, and these challenges might be due to the problems associated with the SGBs. The current study will address the challenges by researching the coping strategies informed by empirical research findings. The study is also expected to generate vital information, and an in-depth understanding of the learners and teachers' challenges, perceptions and views on how to effectively strengthen the role of the SGBs. The study is expected to contribute to the bank of knowledge.

### **1.8.1 The South African Government**

The South African Government is expected to benefit from the findings of this study in that it would be more informed and in a better position to formulate a user-friendly policy and legislative framework that will capacitate schools and support the SGBs in the execution of their duties. In this regard, the recommendations based on the findings will be proposed for possible adoption by the government on how to support the existing SGBs. It is presumed that the government would continuously review legislation linked to the operations of the SGBs, and use the best practices in their work.

### **1.8.2 Civil Society**

Capacitating the SGBs remains a shared responsibility; hence, the findings of this study could assist members of the NGOs/NPOs and civil society organisations to develop positive attitudes towards collaborating with the government in strengthening the SGBs. The findings of the study could serve as the basis for further research by the NGOs/NPOs intended to improve the SGBs' effectiveness.

### **1.8.3 The General Citizenry**

The study findings will be applicable to South African citizens, parents of school-going children as well as those connected to and with the education sector. They will have an opportunity to acquire comprehensive and deep knowledge on facts surrounding

the SGB concept in the education sector, particularly its role in enhancing school effectiveness.

#### **1.8.4 Other researchers**

Through the findings of this study, other researchers should feel motivated to advance research in this vital area. Thus, to other researchers, the study findings will act as a potential knowledge bank from which they can draw for future research.

This section has explored the significance of the study to different sections of people. In particular, the identified sections tend to be the main beneficiaries of this study. The next section will present the theoretical framework that informed the study.

### **1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section presents an overview of the theoretical framework that was used to frame the study. The detailed discussion of the theoretical framework is presented in the next chapter. According to Kombo and Tromp (2009:56), a theoretical framework is:

*...a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories. It is a reasoned set of prepositions, which are derived from and supported by data or evidence. A theoretical framework accounts for or explains phenomena. It attempts to clarify why things are the way they are, based on theories. A theoretical framework is a general set of assumptions about the nature of phenomena.*

Therefore, a theoretical framework justifies the existence of a given phenomenon and strengthens the researcher's argument by informing the study from a theoretical standpoint. The use of multiple theories is advantageous in that it provides some complementary effect on the theories that are used (Kombo & Tromp, 2009:57). This study was principally informed by symbolic interactionism theory as the main theory. The study used the symbolic interactionism theory, which interprets the role of the SGBs. In complementing the symbolic interactionism, the study used the systems theory, which shows the relevance of the SGBs in society. These theories are of relevance to this study, as their basic assumptions have some direct and indirect links to the study on the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South Africa. For purposes of clarity and contextualisation, the theories were related to practical examples and scenarios in a school situation.

## **1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Van Wyk (2014:50) defines a research design as “the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent (and achievable) empirical research.” The author further posits that “the research design also reflects the purpose of the inquiry.” The research design used in this research was mixed methods, which includes both qualitative and quantitative research. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004:770) assert that conducting a research by means of mixed methods analysis can be used to enhance the interpretation of significant findings in both quantitative and qualitative educational evaluation and policy research. The rationale behind following a mixed methods approach was to increase the validity and reliability of the findings, and provide a way forward and insight into a research problem or topic at hand. Qualitative or quantitative methods alone may leave some gaps that can be addressed comprehensively by the combination of both. With the qualitative approach, the results are descriptive rather than prescriptive (Bryman & Bell, 2017:13). The qualitative research design is described by Creswell (2013:27) as one that “provides context-bound information”, which enables the researchers to create from the generated data “patterns or theories that help to explain” the actions and the feelings of the participants. The qualitative aspect is a phenomenological study (Reddy, 2017:16). The quantitative approach, on the other hand, creates an opportunity for the groups or variables to be compared by using statistical analysis, using quantitative means. Since the mixed methods research was used for this study, the data were gathered through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, oral history discussions, focus groups, participant observations, and surveys as well as quantitative methods, measuring the variables by using Chi-square and statistically significant differences between the previously predominantly white, and the historically disadvantaged black public schools (Lester, 2013:38).

The study was conducted in 10 schools in Cape Town (the Western Cape Province in South Africa), where the researcher gathered the required evidence. These data eventually led to the findings regarding how the SGBs in the disadvantaged, historically black public schools could achieve a standard that will be on a par with all other schools, through effective school management and governance.



### **1.10.1 Research Approach**

This study focused on exposing challenges regarding democratic governance and equity that needed to be addressed in the 10 schools in the Western Cape Province as a sample for the whole of the South African population, and thereafter, the findings can be tested in other parts of the world. For the purpose of this thesis, a mixed methods approach was used to explore the options available to the SGBs in differentiated school contexts that enable them to perform well in their school governing roles. The phenomenological research helped to establish the root causes of the ill-performing SGBs. In this regard, Guskey and Peterson (2017) cited in Tsotetsi, Van Wyk, and Lemmer (2008:394) warn that “a lack of knowledge and expertise in educational matters ends up in SGBs avoiding, ignoring and neglecting issues relating to teaching and learning”. In this study, semi-structured interviews with a clear set of instructions for the interviewees were provided to generate reliable and comparable qualitative data (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [RWJF], 2018:34).

This type of interview is often preceded by observation, informal and unstructured interviewing to allow the researcher to develop an understanding of the topic of interest (RWJF, 2018:35). Semi-structured interviews contain open-ended questions and discussions, and allow participants the freedom to express their views in their own terms (RWJF, 2018:35). The interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. The population of this study consisted of all South African schools at large, which have a history of low learner achievement in the past, and still continue to record such low outcomes despite the new, democratically elected government and SGBs. One of the questions to consider is whether the low-performing schools are aware of the reasons for such poor performance. If they are, the questions are whether there were any attempts made to address this situation or not, and if they ever received any outside support to help salvage learners from this disaster, and to what extent.

The researcher is currently an Education Advisor at the American Consulate in Cape Town. Representatives from the Department of Education, also referred to as the Education Department, the SGBs from selected schools and learners aged 18 and above (senior learners at high school level) were interviewed. There was no conflict of interest, since the researcher is not affiliated to any of the schools selected for the study, so she was able to implore participants to respond candidly, which enhanced

the validity and reliability of the data. This study was undertaken mainly for academic purposes and to achieve its objectives, the researcher assured participants that anonymity and confidentiality will be upheld to protect their identities. To maintain credibility and the validity of the findings, the researcher did not influence the responses of the participants in any way. The purpose of the research and how it will benefit the Department of Education and the school system in South Africa at large were explained to all the participants. A high level of professionalism was maintained and the researcher was objective, consistent and forthright.

### **1.10.2 The Literature Study**

A literature study is a study, in which one reads selected texts, such as a novel, short story, or poem, and thereafter writes a paper about it. Sometimes, it deals with only one piece of literature, but it can also deal with many more. Raddon (2010:3) observes that empirical research is research that is done through experimentation and observation, and is more 'hands on' and scientific in nature. Against this backdrop, this study undertook a literature study to provide insights into what other scholars, experts and researchers have researched before, and documented with regard to the role of the SGBs in enhancing school governance and effectiveness. In this respect, journal articles, books, media clippings, papers presented on conferences, internet data, and online website material formed the basis of the theoretical foundation for this study.

### **1.10.3 The Empirical Investigation**

Adler University (2010) defines empirical investigation as research conducted and conclusions reached by means of observation and documentation. Therefore, empirical investigation entails that the researcher would visit the field to observe how participants behave in a 'natural setting'. This study used both qualitative and quantitative research designs as the key approaches. In utilising the two methodologies, the researcher gathered information and rich data through face-to-face interviews with principals, teachers, parents and learners with a fairly lengthy and deep engagement in the natural settings, which included the selected schools in the Western Cape. Qualitative research refers to the research that deals with people's real words and meanings, and is statistics-free (Miles & Huberman, 2012:23). Quantitative

research deals with research based on numerical and statistical data (Patton, 2012:45).

#### **1.10.4 Sampling, Site Selection and Selection of Participants**

The study made use of both probability and non-probability sampling techniques for selecting the site and participants for the study. Various sampling techniques were adopted, depending on the stage at which the process of sampling was to take place. A purposeful sampling technique was used, because it required access to key informants in the field who could help with identifying information-rich cases for an in-depth study (Suri, 2011:66). The samples were drawn from 10 education districts/circuits in the Western Cape Province, in a metropolitan area of South Africa, and 30 schools (the sites) were selected. The participants consisted of the principals (individual perspective); parents (focus group discussion); learners (focus group discussion); and teachers (individual perspective). Prior arrangements were made with the principal of each school, and permission was sought from learners, teachers, and parents before the sites were visited and interviews conducted. These 30 schools were selected using the purposive/convenience sampling technique. Purposive sampling is appropriate to select unique cases that are especially informative (Neuman, 2010:222). In addition, the selection of the principals was based on purposive sampling, since the participants held exclusive positions of authority, and in this case, only one head of school (principal) represents one school, unlike the teachers, where more than one teacher was selected at each school.

#### **1.10.5 Data Collection Methods**

This study used five (5) main data collection/gathering instruments during the research study. These were interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, document analysis, and observations.

##### **1.10.5.1 Interviews**

The researcher used a semi-structured interview style for compiling the questions to be asked beforehand (Creswell, 2013:160). Additionally, questions based on the literature study, focusing on the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness,

were included in the interview schedule/topic guide. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 school principals and 9 provincial administrators.

#### 1.10.5.2 Questionnaires

According to Easterly-Smith, Thrope and Lowe (2012:76), questionnaires are commonly used as data collection tools because they are a cost-effective way to gather comparable information from a group of people. Therefore, a questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions was issued to participants. In this study, 60 questionnaires were administered to teachers.

#### 1.10.5.3 Focus group discussions

A focus group discussion is an approach/technique in which some discussion schedules are used to interview 5 to 10 participants simultaneously (Shumba & Kaziboni, 2018:46). In this study, the researcher personally conducted face-to-face focus group discussions with 90 learners put into separate, smaller groups to establish their perceptions regarding the subject under investigation.

#### 1.10.5.4 Document analysis

In this study, documentary analysis procedures were significant. Critical policy documents that govern the day-to-day business transactions in schools were studied. According to Leedy (2012:123), “documentary analysis is a detailed and systematic examination of documents on a particular organisation”. In this respect, documents that were analysed included school magazines, annual reports, financial and resources management policies, strategic plans for the selected schools, existing previous internal and external audit reports, and other relevant school information books that had a bearing on the SGB operations.

#### 1.10.5.5 Observation

In this study, an observation was used as a data gathering instrument. As such, the researcher took field notes while she observed participants’ behaviours and noted emerging issues. Pratt (2009:14) postulates that field notes are one of the main methods employed in qualitative research and an integral part of in-depth interviewing. Additionally, the researcher can gather first-hand information through observations

(Faculty of Education UKZN, 2010:74). The researcher used observations in conjunction with other data collection methods to complement and augment the quality of evidence gathered.

#### **1.10.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This study used the mixed methods approach. The analysis and interpretation addressed the requirements/needs of qualitative and quantitative data, respectively. Qualitative data analysis, as a form of knowledge management, is a matter of managing analytical processes to transform data into information, then information into knowledge, and finally knowledge into wisdom (Chenail, 2012:248). Therefore, in this study, the findings are presented in thematic form after categorising the major emerging themes from selective coding. In turn, the quantitative data were analysed using statistical/numerical representations in the form of tables and other relevant numerical representations. Following the recommendations by the Faculty of Education at UKZN (2010:116), the researcher organised the collected data into categories and sub-categories, and adopted the technique of comparing and contrasting the gathered data during the data analysis process. Substantiating evidence from participants was provided to give meaning to the data. Guided by Marshall and Rossman's (2010:33) advice, the reporting of major findings adopted the principles of thick description of data. In this respect, data were transcribed and coded into categories from the semi-structured interviews conducted with principals, provincial administrators, teachers and learners.

This section presented the overview of the research design, research methodology, data presentation and analysis procedures. The next section will present the mechanisms of ensuring ethical standards of the research are adhered to.

#### **1.10.7 Ethical Standards of Research**

In this study, ethics were of paramount importance as moral principles influencing the day-to-day conduct of individuals. Silverman (2010:201) warns that when conducting a study, researchers should keep in mind that they are in actual fact encroaching on the private spaces of their participants. In undertaking this study, the researcher adhered to the list of procedures outlined below:

- The researcher requested consent for the study from the Department of Basic Education to conduct research in 10 selected schools.
- The researcher approached the school principals and the school governing bodies of the selected schools. In addition, where possible, the interviews were conducted after hours to avoid interfering with the normal business of the school.
- Participants were informed that personal information would not be released to anyone.
- Upon obtaining approval from the Ministry of Education, the school principals' informed written consent was requested as an initial step. Secondly, all the selected participants signed the written consent forms prior to their engagement in the study.
- The purpose of the study was also verbally explained to the participants and they were assured of the fact that the gathered data would be used only for the purposes of the study.
- Participants were also assured that their identities would not be exposed to anyone and that their participation would always be anonymous.
- The participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time they deemed it necessary.
- The researcher informed the participants that a tape recorder would be used to record the interviews, but only with their permission.
- A schedule with dates and times was drawn up by the researcher after consent was obtained.

It was envisaged that these steps would provide the mechanisms that would ensure that ethical standards were not violated in any way.

This section provided the overview of the research design, research methodology, data presentation and analysis procedures. It presented the mechanisms of ensuring the ethical standards of the research. The next section presents the delimitations of the study.

### **1.11 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD STUDY**

In terms of the guidelines used, the study was geographically confined to 10 schools in the Western Cape Province, a metropolitan area in South Africa. The thrust of the

study was on the role of the SGBs in enhancing the effectiveness of schools. As such, this research study used the qualitative and quantitative research methods. It was envisaged that the results and findings obtained will be representative and generalisable to other schools not directly studied. Both males and females constituted the participants in this study. The study of the role of the SGBs is broad, but conceptually, this study was confined to the study of the SGBs with emphasis on their role in enhancing the effectiveness of South African schools. Discourses on the SGBs, school governors, roles and responsibilities of school governors as presented in the literature review were used as sources of information. The timeframe of the study was confined to 1 March 2012 to 31 December 2019.

This section has outlined the delimitations of the study, highlighting the geographical, methodological, conceptual, and time/periodic and gender delimits, respectively. The next section provides the entire organisation of the study through outlining the chapter structure used.

## **1.12 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

This thesis consists of the following seven chapters:

**Chapter 1** introduces the study, its context, formulation of the problem and the outline of the research.

**Chapter 2** presents a review of literature from the South African perspective, focusing on education policies, the organisation, management and governance of schools, and the role of the SGBs in the functioning and effectiveness of schools.

**Chapter 3** undertakes a critical review of approaches, models, frameworks and trends regarding school governance from an international perspective.

**Chapter 4** discusses the research paradigms, methodology, design and data collection procedures.

**Chapter 5** presents, interprets and discusses the research results.

**Chapter 6** provides a summary of the findings.

**Chapter 7** presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

The next section provides the factors that constrained the study and how they were addressed.

### **1.13 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

During the study, the researcher experienced a number of drawbacks, which had an impact on the study. One major weakness included the lack of cooperation from participants who perceived the issue of the SGBs as a sensitive subject.

Another limitation related to the research methodology as the study used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The use of both methodologies is taxing and demanding in nature.

Limited time and financial constraints also limited the study, as the research project was self-funded. I encountered financial challenges in meeting transport and fuel cost to travel to the research sites to collect data. However, to overcome the above limitations, the researcher carefully planned ahead of time. The planning considered use of different data collection techniques such as direct observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis and focus group discussions to improve the validity of data through methodological triangulation.

Although literature on education management in general was referred to extensively in this study, there was limited literature on comparing South Africa's previously disadvantaged public schools to measure, which best practices made some schools improve the quality of learning and teaching, while others have not. To that end, only the selected public high schools in the Eastern, Northern and Western Cape Provinces in South Africa participated in the study. Due to vast distances and geographical areas of the schools in the Cape region, some information was gathered virtually and processed accordingly. In this regard, some questionnaires were emailed to respondents. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted. In some cases, participants for the interview were also contacted by telephone. Not every school governor, district or province has a full understanding of the rationale behind this study; and in some cases, the researcher faced resistance and non-response by intimidated and uncomfortable school communities. In some instances, some school authorities decided to rather 'cover their shame' than disclose information that could put their schools 'under surveillance' when the conditions appeared to be unsuitable to improve learners' performance.



## **1.14 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The key terms that are used throughout the study are defined hereunder:

- **School governing bodies**

According to Bryston (2017:12), the SGBs are important structures that ensure the smooth running of schools. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 defines a 'school governing body' as "a statutory body of parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and learners (from Grade 8 or higher) who seek to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the school community and thereby enhance learning and teaching."

- **Enhancing**

The term 'enhancing' means improving or promoting or providing an enabling environment for something (Oxford Advanced Dictionary, 2017:18).

- **Racial segregation**

Du Toit and Gilliomee (2013:35) observe that racial segregation comes into existence in multiracial communities when humans are separated into racial groups. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2018:2) defines segregation as "the Act by which a (natural or legal) person separates other persons on the basis of one of the enumerated grounds without an objective and reasonable justification, in conformity with the proposed definition of discrimination."

- **Empowerment**

The World Bank (2010:42) defines empowerment as "the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes".

- **Deliberative democracy**

Carcasson and Sprain (2010:18) define deliberative democracy as an approach where the participants are involved in public decision-making and problem-solving.

- School effectiveness

School effectiveness can be defined as a degree to which an educational system and its components and stakeholders achieve specific desired goals and effects (Goldstein, 2017: 370)

### **1.15 SUMMARY**

This chapter has provided the background to the study and outlined the significance of the study. The chapter has further provided a description of the problem statement, research questions, research aims and objectives. The main research methodology has been explained, including the data collection methods used. The data collection instruments included semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, document analysis, and observations. The ethical considerations followed during data collection are also explained. The chapter has also defined the key concepts used in the study, and provided the delimitations and an outline of the study. The next chapter will provide a historical account of the SGBs in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE ORGANISATION AND FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter provided the historical context of South African education, the effects of apartheid on educational inequalities, particularly regarding the historically disadvantaged black public schools. It also provided a background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, the research methodology adopted for the study, the study sample and data analysis. This chapter reviews scholarly literature and policy documents on the SGBs and attempts to show their importance in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools.

The introduction of the SGBs is regarded as a pivotal and effective strategy for enhancing school effectiveness and governance in South Africa. As pointed out in Chapter 1, South African schools have been experiencing some governance problems that date back to the apartheid era. There are different views and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the school system in South Africa as a whole.

Vandeyar (2010:1) posits, “The South African portrait is framed by a history of apartheid in which ‘difference’ was construed in hierarchical terms and colour coded with a carefully crafted, politically legitimated pigmentocracy.” To address the problems caused by such hierarchical differences, policy interventions at all levels of the country’s education management were needed. Collaboration among all stakeholders and transparency in decisions and procedures are necessary to ensure effective and efficient management of schools (Mestry, 2006:37).

#### **2.2 OVERVIEW AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE PROBLEM UNDER INVESTIGATION**

Scholars such as Moos, Mahony and Reeves (2018:3) attribute the ineffectiveness of schools to the absence of viable SGBs and other political, social, and economic crises that have affected the country since the attainment of democracy in 1994. Beets and Van Louw (2015:1) argue that South Africa has been negatively affected by a myriad of crises in its political, economic, and social systems, which require the promulgation

of education policies. In addition, Habschmidt (2017:109) argues that in any nation, the effectiveness of schools is dependent on the nature of the SGBs, and the attitudes of members of that society to support school governance initiatives. In support of the SGBs, the Washington State School Directors' Association (2016:3) notes that 'school boards are architects and drivers of school district policies that directly affect learners' performance'.

The described situation in South Africa calls for research, and for the development and implementation of school governance ideals that provide sustainable solutions, which will have to assist in bringing positive school governance to the country. There is an urgent need to ensure that the SGBs are firstly capacitated and then supported fully in their operations to bring about the much-needed change because persistent ineffectiveness of the SGBs has had ripple effects on the quality of education in schools (Holt & Murphy, 2013:176). Effective school governance is required in South Africa, because it promotes quality teaching and learning processes, and entrenches mutual respect, and tolerance of diversity-existence between the community and the schools, and sustainable development (Mafora, 2012:104).

Effective school governance is central to attaining good results in schools and thus, to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. To address the challenges of inequalities experienced in historically disadvantaged schools, Odhav (2009:52) suggested that "equity through access, opportunity and capacity" must be achieved in order to see the evidence of transformation and a boost in economic development. In an effort to address persistent conflicts that continue to undermine the co-existence between school authorities and the SGBs in South Africa, Mutero (2013:20) stresses the need for robust institutional mechanisms that support the building of sustainable school governance. School governance researchers such as Sesero (2016:2) and Kayumbu (2017:15) have strongly maintained that schools should use the establishment of the SGBs as one of the best strategies for promoting effective school governance. Bush and Gamage (2011:39) point out the importance of the SGBs in South African schools as the 'only intervention' that guarantees collaborative engagement, since they are beneficial for the school and its learners as well as the communities they serve.

The National School Boards Association (2012:3) has developed a framework based on the 'Key Work of School Boards'. This framework for leadership and governance promotes systems thinking around eight key actions that focus and guide boards in their efforts to improve learner performance; namely, vision, standards, assessment, accountability, alignment, climate, collaborative relationships, and continuous improvement. This framework is critical in this study, since it could assist in investigating the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness. Thus, the vision and the actual standards set by a school will ultimately have an impact on the collaborative climate prevailing at any given school. Furthermore, such climate has a bearing on the academic standards set and the actual performance by the learners as well.

In South Africa, the SGBs are viewed as an important component of the education sector, and they promote tolerance, sharing, and co-existence among different stakeholders in schools (Bush & Heystek, 2013:127). Duku and Salami (2017:112) reinforce this stance by emphasising that the SGBs raise awareness of all the critical issues pertaining to the day-to-day operations and management of schools. Bush (2005:67) affirms that the SGBs can contribute to laying the foundation for solid and sustainable governance at schools.

The SGBs are relevant structures that have been used as the bedrock for the attainment of sustainable administration and management of schools in countries that experienced governance challenges such as South Africa, Kenya and Namibia (Xaba, 2011:201; Onger, 2015:4; Republic of Namibia, 2016:2).

In terms of the Education Act ([England and Wales] section 76, (Legislation.gov.uk, 1988), the SGBs have been used as a mechanism for promoting the effectiveness of schools. The Act stipulates that it shall be the duty of parents of every child of compulsory school age to cause that child to receive full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It can be deduced from this statement that there are some differences in point of emphasis regarding the nature and scope of democracy, and school governance initiatives across the globe; hence, there is the need for stakeholders in South Africa to appreciate the critical role they play in increasing the effectiveness of schools.

Levy and Shumane (2017:6) observe that in South Africa, the SGBs have been used as a strategy to promote shared values in order to develop and improve the overall management of schools. The Lighthouse study which involved different participants, has demonstrated that the SGBs have common and universal functions, among them the need to enhance the effectiveness of schools, while promoting a spirit of togetherness among stakeholders in a school system (Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) and the National School Board Association's (NSBA) (2011:2).

By their nature, boards do not create learning; rather, they work through others by creating conditions that promote learning (Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB), 2011:4).

In the context of the above, it is argued that functional and effective SGBs are imperative for the success of schools in South Africa, as they help to build institutions and structures that promote good governance and effective management of schools. The SGBs are critical in developing teacher-learner-community capabilities for implementing organisational goals in schools (Bryston, 2017:12). Looyen (2010:20) points out that the SGBs are vital in laying the foundations for positive collaborative school governance. Therefore, the introduction and support of the SGBs seems to be an appropriate strategy that can transform the prevailing negative perceptions of school governance in South Africa. The SGBs should also forge teamwork and co-existence among school authorities and the community. As Smit (2015:73) explains, the strategy for the SGBs is dependent on the cooperation between the school authorities and parents in the concerned community in order to establish widespread support for school governance policies. An essential strategy for promoting the effectiveness of the SGBs involves training all the relevant parties who take part in the development processes of schools. Wolfendale (2016:92) proposes a model of collaboration and intervention in which parents as primary carers and first teachers are perceived as cooperating partners in the educational enterprise and are seen as equivalent and complementary to that of professionals.

Delagardelle (2018:191) complements this view by stating that the role the SGBs is community/society dependent, meaning that "the success of SGBs is more dependent on the attitudes, perceptions, motivations and abilities of the members of society". Boaduo, Milondzo, and Adjei (2009:95) emphasise the need to adequately prepare

school authorities together with parents, if the SGBs are to be successfully managed. It is assumed that establishing effective SGBs would enhance the productivity and effectiveness of schools in South Africa. As Levy and Shumane (2017:18) note, the SGBs are an essential initiative in South African schools, because “they provide the conducive platform and forum for exchange of new perspectives, knowledge and skills for the effective management of schools”.

Khuzwayo (2017:33) argues that one of the vital roles of the SGBs is to create a democratic environment that allows an exchange of views and ideas, and promotes a sustainable, renewable and effective school governance. Carcasson and Sprain (2010:18) propose deliberative democracy as a strategy and approach, where the participants are “deeply involved in public decision-making and problem-solving”. Thus, the SGBs should provide a democratic forum to support various stakeholders involved in school governance to exercise their rights in the management of the respective school.

In light of the above, it is imperative to evaluate the work of the SGBs to determine how they can be supported in a school environment so that they can be more productive and efficient. In this regard, this chapter will explore the following themes: the description of school governance and the SGBs; the roles and functions of the SGBs; the structure and composition of the SGBs; and the rationale for the SGBs, among others.

### **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study was principally informed by the symbolic interactionism theory. However, this does not render other theories useless. For the purposes of elaboration, this theoretical framework makes reference to the systems theory and differential association theory. In providing a critique of symbolic interactionism, the assumptions of the Marxist theory are also incorporated into the discussion. In order to get multiple theoretical views on the subject of the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness, the symbolic interactionism theory is also used to frame the study. The rationale for choosing this theory was that the study of the SGBs’ role in enhancing school effectiveness can be interpreted differently by various stakeholders. This section explores the relevance of symbolic interactionism in this study. Against this

background, the section's main thrust is on the possible merits and shortcomings of the theory and its relevance to the South African context.

### **2.3.1 Key Principles of the Symbolic Interactionism Theory**

Symbolic interactionism rests on the central principle that a human being is always active and interacting (Brinkerhoff & White, 2010:17). From this perspective, it is argued that interactions rely on language as a key aspect in negotiating and attaching meaning to social happenings. Critical in the meaning attached is the subjectivity nature. Symbolic interactionists maintain that more often, meaning involves some symbols and gestures during the process of interactions. In some cases, individuals label each other as they interact, consequently making the label fit, and then behave in accordance with the label, thus ensuring a self-fulfilling prophecy (Becker, 2013:15).

Symbolic interactionism is credited for providing a plausible explanation of the meaning generated and arising from assessments and evaluations regarding the role played by the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South Africa. The underlying reason for resting on this theory is that the study of principals, parents, teachers and learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards the SGBs is largely in the context of day-to-day, face-to-face interactions. As such, the meanings attached to differential academic achievement as a result of the SGB interventions are relative and would be best understood from the perspective of the beholder.

Crossman (2017:1) notes that the symbolic interactionism theory was developed by George Herbert Mead to describe the face-to-face micro interactions. In this regard, face-to-face interactions are associated with the networks between the principals, teachers and the SGBs as they engage in the day-to-day running of the schools. This theory was further modified by Herbert Blumer. The phrase "symbolic interactionism" has been adopted as a label for a relatively distinctive approach to the study of human life and human conduct (Blumer, 2009:12). This perspective considers human beings to be actively shaping their environment, rather than as entities who are acted upon by society (Charon, 2010:39; Herman-Kinney & Reynolds, 2014:65). Given this situation, the major assumption would be that the entire school environment is shaped by the relevant stakeholders who include principals, teachers, parents, and learners.



Thus, the effectiveness of schools will hinge on the active interactions happening between all these parties.

Blumer (2009:13) illustrated three basic premises of this viewpoint:

- Humans react towards objects or things based on the meaning they ascribe to those things;
- The meaning of such objects is created from, or comes out of, the social interaction that one has with others and the society;
- This meaning is acted upon, and changed through, an interpretative process used by the persons in dealing with the things they encounter.

Against this background, it follows that the evaluations regarding the SGBs' contribution to school effectiveness can be interpreted in a range of ways. In addition, language of relating to the concept 'effectiveness' can be contextually developed to the extent that various communities may develop their own criteria of defining the SGBs' contribution and effectiveness. Human beings do not feel their environment directly; instead, human beings define the situation they are in (Blumer, 2009:14). An environment may exist, but it is one's definition of it that is important. The definition is not simply randomly evolved; instead, it results from ongoing social interaction and thinking, (Blumer, 2009:12). The roles and functions of the SGBs under South African law are provided for and defined by SASA (SASA, 1996).

Thus, in understanding the global differences between school boards across the globe, it is argued that symbolic interactionism relates well, considering its emphasis on 'relativity and subjective interpretations'. The researcher argues that in this context, the differential association theory and labelling theory can also be used as key theoretical perspectives under symbolic interactionism. According to symbolic interactionists, deviance is learned in the same way as conformity through interaction with others (Anderson & Taylor, 2010:33). In this regard, it follows that the key functions of the SGBs is to perform the regulatory functions to ensure that there is optimal compliance to set school governance ideals and laws.

Deviations from the expected standards may arise, which will have ripple effects on the effectiveness of the schools. It can be argued that parents, principals and teachers may be socialised to circumvent the school's rules much as differential association

theorists maintain that 'deviance can be learned'. According to Ritzer (2009:46), Edwin Sutherland (1939) developed a theory called 'Differential Association' nearly a century ago to explain how people learn deviance through social interaction. Differential association theory views individuals as having a higher tenacity to diverge from norms of the society when they frequently associate with persons who favour deviance over conformity. These theoretical views are critical, since the establishment of the SGBs is to ensure consistent enforcement of school rules to promote quality provision of education.

According to Fleming, Rothenberg and Zyglidopolous (2009:66), such a process perspective had been invoked to explain why persons not considered to be deviant or criminal might still decide to engage in violations of set standards and rules in any given setting. This perspective is further invoked to understand the kind of ethical reflections (or lack of these) that lie behind violations of school/institutional rules and standards. Labelling theory suggests that deviants are those people who have been successfully labelled as such by others. Labelling is part of the social control process related to the power and status of those persons who do the labelling and those persons being labelled (Becker, 2013:4). It is argued that in view of the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness, principals and teachers may be labelled negatively by the school boards that superintend the running of the school. Consequently, in return, the school boards can be given negative labels by the teachers and principals.

Haralambos and Holborn (2012:36) are of the view that those who are labelled may develop a self-fulfilling prophecy, a condition of accepting the label and behaving accordingly. Given this situation, the blame game can also result in negative effects on academic attainment. Either way, such labels may have an impact on the teaching and learning processes in schools. School boards, principals and teachers that are labelled as being ineffective may in some instances accept the label and become perpetrators of quality standard violations based on the 'accepted' label. Consequently, positive labelling may reinforce compliance at all cost. Becker (2013:6) notes that "*moral entrepreneurs*" are persons who make use of their own viewpoints of what is wrong or they create rules and label others as deviant, if they do not perform

according to their own moral judgement. Thus, moral entrepreneurs are people or groups who take an active role in trying to have behaviours defined as deviant.

### **2.3.2 Relevance to the South African context**

The symbolic interactionism theory is relevant to the South African context and can be successfully utilised. In South Africa, the roles and functions of the SGBs are prescribed by the SASA. The provisions of the Act are set with a view to provide harmonious working relationships and healthy interactions in schools. Without regulatory frameworks in place, it would be difficult to negotiate some common ground and reach a consensus. The theory provides a plausible explanation and harmonises the prevalence of subjective and relative interpretations regarding the role of the SGBs in enhancing the effectiveness of schools.

A study by Transparency International (2016:28), focusing on the education sector, reveals that the prevalence of poor corporate governance in public schools has been precipitated by cultural beliefs, day-to-day interactions and negative socialisations through shared experiences in society. In view of the role of the SGBs in South Africa, it can be argued that violations to the set standards in schools may result through shared actions. Thus, Transparency International (2016:30) concludes that interaction stemming from cultural beliefs motivates principals, learners, parents and teachers to engage in corrupt and below-standard practices in schools.

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that there are violations of set regulatory frameworks that are meant to govern the manner in which schools should be run in South Africa. Therefore, I argue that the symbolic interactionism provides a comprehensive understanding of how people relate and perceive the roles played by certain structures, and the interpretations that arise from the evaluations and assessment on the utility of a given phenomenon. Considering harmonisation of interactions among relevant stakeholders in a school system, the theory provides opportunities for mapping the way forward. The narrative and conversations to improve school governance must begin with the stakeholders and not only as sound bites, but rather as a broader and all-encompassing strategy meant to uphold a spirit of shared vision in achieving organisational goals (Land, 2012:229; Moorosi & Bantwini, 2016:4; Kayumbu, 2017:87). Therefore, it is critical to adopt school

governance strategies in South African schools that make a deliberate effort to enhance the effectiveness of the institutions through capacitating the role of the SGBs.

In this regard, the assumptions of the systems theory would complement and augment this view. According to the systems theory, society operates through critical organs and established structures that conform to some set goals (Richards, 2017:27). Ritzer (2009:15) expounds that in society, there are structures that should work together interdependently for its survival. These structures have coherent and cohesive functions or roles, which they should apply to complement each other for the good of society; for example, similar to the functioning of families and society, the school inculcates moral values in learners. In the context of this study, the SGBs are key structures that should uphold the values of schools. In society, there are usually agreed norms and values that regulate or prescribe certain acceptable behaviours. Education usually achieves to uphold these values through the socialisation process; hence, it fills the gap that exists between what the youth know and what they are expected to know by society.

Drawing lessons from the symbolic interactionism theory's key assumptions, the researcher is of the view that to understand the multiple roles of the SGBs in South Africa as stipulated by SASA, there is the need to invoke the key tenets of the theory. Additionally, in order to harmonise the perceptions and assessments of schools' effectiveness in the context of a heterogeneous and multi-lingual society, there is the need to appreciate the societal values and meaning attached to the utility role played by the SGBs. The researcher contends that measurement of effectiveness is a subjective and relative concept, and the standards, expectations and values may vary from school to school, regardless of set statutory standards. On the other hand, if one were to accept such relative interpretation of values and standards, it could then lead to different standards and performances, and different outcomes being entrenched in the different schools, instead of leading to development and equalisation of the total education structure.

### **2.3.3 Utilisation of the Symbolic Interactionism Theory in analysing Data/Findings**

In the analysis of the data/findings, the symbolic interactionism theory was central in providing plausible understanding of the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness. Largely, the qualitative findings from the study provided different experiences and perspectives regarding the role played by the SGBs. The questionnaire survey was the main data collection instrument for the quantitative data. However, most of the questions were crafted in such a way that they also generated qualitative data, since they were open-ended. Given this outcome, the study findings had an inclination towards qualitative data. Therefore, the relative and subjective responses provided by participants were analysed in the context of the key assumptions of the theory. This assisted the researcher to appreciate and interpret the responses divergently with an open mind.

The multiple meanings derived from the perceived role of the SGBs and their subsequent effect in enhancing school effectiveness were attested against the symbolic interactionism theory's key assumptions, for the researcher to make informed conclusions. Therefore, in using the Symbolic Interactionism assumptions, the researcher established multiple strategies for promoting the role of the SGBs and was enabled to propose novel recommendations that in turn strengthen the provision of quality education in schools as put forward by the symbolic interactionism theory. The meanings attached to the SGBs by principals, teachers, learners, and parents may vary from one school to another. However, the theory allowed the researcher to build and develop an informed understanding of the gathered data and make meaning out of it in multiple ways. This implied that parents, principals, teachers, and learners were viewed as 'active participants' and potential contributors to the role played by the SGBs. This confirms the principles of symbolic interactionism regarding the nature in which meanings are acted upon and changed through an interpretative process as expounded by Blumer (2009:12).

### **2.3.4 Critique of the Symbolic Interactionism Theory**

This study investigated the role of the SGBs on enhancing school effectiveness in South Africa. Considering the foregoing, the review of literature suggested that the

SGBs have multiple roles and affect school effectiveness differently (Hofman, Hofman, & Guldmond, 2012:254). It has been shown that in some cases, violations of and deviations from the provisions of the SGBs' legislation may be the result of ignorance, weak systems and the need to pursue personal gains corruptly (Transparency International, 2016:20). Therefore, from this dimension, the Conflict theory provides a critique to symbolic interactionism. The critique mainly focuses on the origin of such violations or deviant behaviour. While symbolic interactionists insist on applying the differential association theory, which results in the learning of deviant behaviours that cause violations of set standards, the Conflict theory argues that individuals commit acts of deviance to fight an oppressive system in society.

Ritzer (2009:15) notes that Karl Marx was of the view that institutions (such as law, politics, and education) make up superstructures in society that legitimise the class structure and maintain the capitalists' superior position in it. A violation of set standards is thus an expression of the individual's struggle against any unjust social conditions and inequality produced by capitalism. Therefore, multiple interpretations arise as a result of different economic, class, status, political, and social standpoints of individuals concerned. Quinney (2010:14) advances that people with economic and political power define any behaviour that threatens their own interests as deviance, violation or criminal. The powerful use laws to control those who are without power. Considering school governance experiences, the conflict theorists suggest that poor individuals support and get involved in violations of the School Board Act as they see themselves not being able to afford the basic life essentials such as education, food, clothing, shelter and healthcare. Thus, the SGBs may be infiltrated by individuals who want to advance corrupt and selfish gains. In this case, the effectiveness of the school board would be questionable, leading to provision of poor quality of education for everybody in the school. The violations of the SASA policies and legislation, and thus the SGB's function in schools represent an emotional and rationalised response by the poor and the selfish to the unequal distribution of resources in society. Living in poverty may lead to violent crime and victimisation of the poor by the poor (Haralambos & Holborn, 2012:34; Ritzer, 2009:69; Kirby, Kidd, Koubel, Barter, Hope, Kirton, Madry, Manning & Triggs, 2009:12).

## **2.4 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

This section presents the historical background of the South African education system. It explores the key features of the system during both the apartheid era and the post-apartheid era to assess and locate the roles and functions of the SGBs.

### **2.4.1 Pre-1994 Education System in South Africa**

Lardeyret (2015:12) states that before the advent of democracy in 1994, “The prospects for sustainable democracy in South Africa are grim, if an effectively strong opposition and other mechanisms are not enhanced to ensure that accountability of public functionaries is exacted and the essential principles of democracy are adhered to by all.” Regarding education, Clarke (2012:1) stresses that schools are meant for learners, and should be designed and run to ensure the best possible education for every learner that attends that school. It follows that in order for schools to provide ‘the best education for learners’, there is a need to be governed by principles and some body of rules that regulate operations. This justified the need for the SGBs to be in place, and assume some oversight role on the day-to-day school operations.

The Department of Education’s officials, as well as principals, governors and school staff (teachers and non-teachers) had to put some mechanisms in place that would establish, maintain and sustain quality education and achieve favourable outcomes. When the National Party won the elections in 1948, it opened doors for the government by the white minority to pursue separate racial development in South Africa (Tordoff, 2012:72). Arguably, during the apartheid era, the South African education system was designed in such a way that it reflected the inequalities based on dominance, exploitation, oppression, poverty, and imposition (Soobrayan, 2010:31).

This study seeks to make a comparison between the previous education system and the current system to establish the similarities and differences between the SGBs of the apartheid era and those of the post-apartheid era. Soobrayan (2010:31) advances that because of the white government in power at that time, institutions had to accept these disparities. Any individual or group of people who dared to object to the system would be faced with possible incarceration. Several racially grouped departments of education were categorised with different qualities and capacities under apartheid.

#### **2.4.2 Post-1994 education system in South Africa**

This section deals with the post-1994 education system in South Africa. It aims to bring to the fore the developments that have occurred in the democratic South Africa. It seeks to highlight the critical roles and functions of the SGBs in the context of the new political order, namely a democratic South Africa.

Spaull (2012:24) asserts that although abolishment of racially-divided schools became one of the strong distinguishing factors between the pre- and post-apartheid governments, the schools continued to function in a similar manner as they did under apartheid, except that they were now racially integrated. Very few efforts were made to change the structural arrangements and effectiveness of the SGBs in the historically disadvantaged schools; the 'status quo' was largely still maintained. There had been a level of expectation that when there was a political change resulting in a change of government that some overhaul of the education system would have followed, particularly targeting key aspects of the SGBs.

Through SASA, the South African government sought to devolve the authority and responsibilities for governing schools to the SGBs; however, practically, the decision-making powers remained largely with the principals, even after 25 years of democracy. Fiske and Ladd (2014:59) further elaborate on this situation and explain that in low-income families, there was a "lingering fear of education as an instrument of political subjugation" in the years following the political transition. In this regard, it follows that those from the low-income families and probably parents with little education, could thus view the whole education system as perpetuating suppression. According to Bourdieu's (1993:6) 'social capital theory', a political system casts its shadows on the education system, thus creating an illusion that children from the middle and upper classes have some advantages over those from the lower class (Anderson & Taylor, 2010:28). It is the principals and the SGBs' responsibility to ensure that their schools deliver quality education to all learners enrolled at their school (Naidu et al., 2018:161). Naidu et al. (2018:15) aptly note that South African schools differ tremendously across regions, between urban and rural schools, schools attended by wealthier learners and those from poorer areas/informal settlements. However, because of the poor economic climate in South Africa at this stage, high levels of unemployment and thus



parents being faced by the challenge how to pay school fees, most schools face increasing challenges.

Even though the establishment of a democratic government in 1994 ushered in many changes in the education system of South Africa, it has taken too long to identify the school improvements (Fleisch & Christie, 2014:12). It follows that the key aspects related to the structures of SGBs may seem to promote school governance initiatives as evidenced by post-apartheid developments. The transformation within education in South Africa since 1994 has shifted its focus on the vision and direction of the education system through a series of policy initiatives. It is further noted that some of the policy initiatives have been formalised in legislation (Republic of South Africa, 1997:11).

#### **2.4.3 Goals of education during the post-apartheid regime**

This section explores in detail the fundamental goals of education during the post-apartheid regime. The study focuses on the role and functions of the SGBs in relation to their contribution to enhancing school effectiveness in South Africa.

It is argued that the key purpose of education is to deliver quality education to learners to ensure that these learners will become productive members of society and the economy, and will be able to compete in their future. The SGBs, as stipulated by the SASA, should play a major role to see to it that their respective schools excel and improve in all ways. How the SGBs strive to promote the improvement of their schools is a concern for all stakeholders involved in school communities. In addition, it is also a concern as to what is constraining the SGBs to fulfil their roles and responsibilities better than before. After new policies and Acts that represented the intention to restructure South African education were finalised and became formalised in legislation, the implementation process seems very slow at the school or local level. Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe (2012:3) assert that the new national and provincial policy frameworks and legislation make it clear that school governance and management need to be re-conceptualised at all levels of the education system.

Therefore, the education system goals should be directed towards the reconceptualization of the management and governance of schools. To this end, there is need for initiatives meant to review the existing goals to establish the extent to which

they encompass the concept of the SGBs. In providing the pre-conditions and setting of parameters, Lumby, Middlewood and Kaabwe (2012:4) state that “this requires a clear understanding of the building blocks of policies and legislations, as well as a clear vision of where the South African education system is going and being mindful of timeframes, constant evaluation and feedback.” The policy frameworks and legislation would therefore seek to empower the SGBs so that they are able to execute their mandate in the post-apartheid era along non-racial and non-discriminatory lines.

## **2.5 SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES**

This section offers a detailed explanation of experiences regarding the SGBs in other countries. There are various models of the SGBs across the globe. This study analyses them to be able to provide scientific and empirical proof regarding the experiences and their impact on school effectiveness. According to the OECD (2014:16) in the Netherlands, the UK and the Flemish Community of Belgium, decision-making is decentralised at the level of the SGB. Thus, the SGBs as pointed out by Land (2012:248) “emerged as a direct response to the urgent need to assist school authorities to effectively manage schools, while promoting parents’ involvement”. From this perspective, the SGBs were informed by the need to promote sustainable school governance across the globe.

Hess (2002:78) contends that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the relevance of the SGBs has shifted away from the conservative prototype, as it now incorporates broader worldview concerns and practices on school governance. In this new paradigm, the SGBs place more emphasis on positive school governance to increase the collective management of schools. For example, in African countries, the concept of the SGBs is increasingly becoming a universal concept, focusing primarily on enhancing effective administration of schools (Moyo, 2012:17). In Zimbabwe, the concept of school development associations was established because of the problems and complaints arising in school administration (Ndlovu, 2015:6). It would seem that the concept of the SGBs lies in some form of decentralisation principle, where the administration of schools is put in the hands of the local parents and governors who have an appreciation of their environment. The Republic of Namibia (2016:2) reports

that through the SGBs, teacher contributions, parental involvement and learner participation, a dynamic leadership structure is formed that can propel schools towards exemplary performance, and safe and conducive school environments. Compared to South Africa, it can be noted that the composition of the SGBs in Namibia has similar features, particularly involvement of learner membership.

There is universal agreement regarding the significance of leadership for improved school performance and successful implementation of large-scale reform initiatives in education (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2010:112). Thus, it can be argued that the SGBs also have to assume leadership roles to enhance school effectiveness. Bantwini and Letseka (2016:7) also identify leadership as playing a crucial role in ensuring great returns in the investment into education.

Despite the fact that several countries across the globe have integrated the SGBs in their educational systems, governance problems still persist in schools. Xaba (2011:217) concurs that the major challenge lies with the SGBs themselves, particularly issues regarding the competencies of the individuals who are members of various SGBs.

The National School Boards Association (2012:10) acknowledges that 14,890 school districts exist in the USA, which translates to just under 100,000 SGB members. Xaba (2011:218) underlines the need for increased investment in the SGBs' members to improve their skills and competences. In the USA, Washington State's school districts continue to make significant progress in raising learner achievement levels, and the SGBs perform an essential role in ensuring that these improvements continue (Washington State School Directors' Association, 2016:4). At an international level, the need for the SGBs has been motivated by concerns that the schools across the globe have been failing to deliver on their mandate to maintain school governance (United Nations Children's Education Fund, 2016:6).

The underlying assumption in this case is that school ineffectiveness is a result of lack of collective engagement among the relevant stakeholders to influence the attitudinal changes through educational interventions such as the establishment of the SGBs. In support of this view, Newton and Sackney's (2012:11) study of trustees in three Canadian provinces reveals that the SGB trustees view policy-making as the primary

role of the SGBs. This is consistent with the SGB governance models in the USA, where the National School Board Association and the American Association of School Administrators have jointly defined the SGBs' roles as the establishment of policy in addition to other related functions (Thomas, 2011:123).

A more recent view affirms that the SGBs have the capacity to transform the overall image of schools by promoting pro-development policies. School boards (SBs) provide an ideal opportunity to improve education delivery. Well-informed SBs that perform their work effectively, strengthen a supportive bond between the school, home and community (Republic of Namibia, 2016:48). Against this background, the section that follows provides an analysis of the SGBs across various parts of the world as essential mechanisms in building a culture of positive school governance.

In view of the foregoing, it is imperative to examine the existing literature on the SGBs and specific case studies, in which the SGBs had been established to enhance school effectiveness.

### **2.5.1 The United States of America and Canada cases**

School governance has been conceptualised differently across the globe. As such, it is therefore critical to appreciate the various models in different nations. In their review of the existing USA literature on school-based management, Wohlstetter and Odden (2012:273) distinguish three models that vary in terms of who gains control over decision-making. The first model, community control, shifts power from professionals and administrators to parent and community groups that were not previously involved in school governance. However, compared to South Africa, it can be deduced that the main goal of the SGBs in the USA are to promote academic performance in schools.

According to Leithwood and Menzies (2018:238), this model is mostly limited to increased accountability to parents and the community at large, along with consumer satisfaction; and this model also fits in reforms aiming at more family choice of schooling. The second model features teacher control through the delegation of decision-making down the ranks of the professional hierarchy. This model is linked to teacher empowerment strategies. The third model features principal control and is aimed at increasing accountability to central or local authorities for the efficient expenditure of resources.

These three critical models are important when analysing school governance in South African schools. The different models have different impacts when it comes to making decisions regarding school funding, learner academic attainment and other critical decisions that enhance school effectiveness.

To appreciate the different forms that school-based management can take, Levacic (1995:25) developed a classificatory framework for its constituent elements. The three key elements are:

- The stakeholders to whom decision-making power and responsibility are decentralised;
- The management domains over which decentralised power can be exercised; and
- The form of regulation that controls what the local decision-makers have discretion over and how they are held accountable for their decisions and actions.

School-based management has some positive impact when it comes to the speed at which decisions are passed and adopted. This therefore, has a positive effect on empowering the relevant stakeholders regarding local school governance ideals. Kruger (2009:1) noted that school leaders had been given an important role in initiating and implementing school improvement, which demanded new forms of leadership.

School boards in Canada operate within a legal context defined by the respective Education Acts of the individual provincial and territorial governments. Their essential function is governance (Carver, 2016:73). They operate within a defined legal context, develop policies and monitor their implementation, make and act on decisions related to the organisation's mission, establish decision-making processes, put in place control mechanisms for the allocation of power, institute procedures for performing specific tasks, and self-evaluate (Kelleher-Flight, 2015:69; Ranson, 2018:213).

## **2.5.2 The England and China Cases**

In other global jurisdictions, the SGBs have different and more elaborate roles as conferred by their legal environments. James, Jones, Connolly, Brammer, Fertig, and James (2012:2) conducted a study in which they analysed the role of the chair of the school governing body in England, drawing on a national survey of governors and the

study of governing in 30 schools. Compared to South Africa, the co-opted SGB members in the UK have voting rights whereas in South Africa they do not have.

The study reveals that the role encompassed: being a governor; appointing and working with the head teacher; acting as a change agent; active participation in the school; organising the governing body; dealing with complaints; working with parents; and chairing meetings.

Governing bodies perform a critical role in school leadership, but despite approximately 300,000 individuals serving as school governors in the UK, vacancies continue to be an issue for many governing bodies. The quality of governance in many schools is also inadequate (House of Commons, 2012:4). Thus, it follows that there is great need to strengthen the role of the SGBs in the UK so as to improve on school effectiveness.

The SGBs have an important role in the management and administration of schools; hence, the position of chair has been well elaborated, based on the reviewed study. The school governance structures of the UK and Northern Ireland excluded parents in the past, but a change in the nature of the SGBs was made through the 1986 Education Act, where governing bodies were reconstituted to include parental, teacher and community representation (Farrell & Law, 2009:17). The strength of the UK and Northern Ireland's school governance was enhanced by the Education Act of 1988, which empowered the SGBs significantly in terms of the management of schools. The Act gave the SGB powers regarding the admission and exclusion of learners, budgetary responsibilities, personnel matters, and the determination of head teacher salary levels (Beckmann & Minnaar, 2015:145).

The most common and inherent characteristics of the SGBs are that they are founded on the active involvement of parents as key stakeholders in the school governance. Although the Chinese concept of the SGBs is not implicitly stated, the Education Law in China imposes the responsibility on society. The Education Law of the People's Republic of China (Ministry of Education, China, 1995) in Article 45 states that "State organs, the army, enterprises, institutions, social associations and other social organisations and individuals shall create a good social environment for the healthy growing-up of children, juveniles and young learners."

Additionally, Article 46 states that “Enterprises, institutions, social associations and other social organisations and individuals may support the construction of schools and participate in management through proper forms.” Against this background, it follows that the multi-stakeholder engagement in the management and administration of schools is a critical undertaking, regardless of other jurisdictions. In a number of countries, the concept of the SGBs is provided for in the education law of the country in question.

The Education Law of the People's Republic of China (2005) in Article 30 sums it up by saying, “Schools and other educational institution sponsors shall decide on the management of schools and other schools according to concerned state regulations.”

### **2.5.3 The Denmark and Netherlands Cases**

In the Netherlands and Denmark, the role of the SGBs is clearly defined and documented. The Danish Education Act of 1993 placed parents at the centre of the educational process and recommends that at all times, school leaders should build a partnership with the school community. Compared to South Africa, this is a similar provision in the legislation that governs the operations of the SGBs, particularly where parents play a pivotal role. In this regard, the Act places more emphasis on the role played by parents as active players. The Act further stipulates that all school governance members should have relevant experience that can assist the school in its work and development efforts. In terms of the Act, parental representation is in the majority, and the board links the principal and parents of learners in a school (Kristoffersson, 2009:38).

Quan-Baffour (2006:33) further notes that the Danish educational approaches seem to be anti-bureaucratic, and stress voluntarism rather than central control, and lateral communication rather than vertical communication. The Danish education system has its own distinct characteristics regarding the nature of school governance.

The weakness of the Danish school governance is that it allows parents who are politically irresponsible to exercise considerable influence in schools, thereby diminishing the authority of the head teacher (Quan-Baffour, 2006: 34).

In their study of the UK and Denmark's school governance practices, Moos et al. (2018:2) establish that the concepts and activities associated with leadership are shaped by political contexts in which they are embedded. This has been one effect of the Effective Leadership in a Time of Change project, which used a variety of research methods to elicit the views of 34 head teachers, 332 teachers, 630 parents, 132 school governors and 1088 learners on school leadership in Denmark, England and Scotland (MacBeath, 2018:123). This is similar to the South African context, where the Education Acts that govern schools are politically determined by the lawmakers. For instance, the South African Schools Act was promulgated by Parliament, and it can be reviewed and repealed by the legislature, if the need arises.

In Denmark, the task of a school in cooperation with parents is to offer learners the possibilities to acquire knowledge, skills, working methods and forms of expression, which contribute to the all-round development of the individual learner (Folkeskole Act of 1993, article 1.1) (Ministry of Children and Education, Denmark, 1993).

With reference to the UK, Hood (2011:5) proposes a new public management (NPM) or 'new managerialism' that was introduced in most OECD countries. Hood notes that an early version of NPM operating in the UK had seven principles or doctrines. These were: hands-on professional management; explicit standards and measures of performance; greater emphasis on output controls; breakup of large organisations operating on decentralised budgets; introduction of competition; stress on commercial styles of management; and stress on doing more for less. This new model framework has had a positive impact on the outlook of school governance. If the South African schools could emulate this framework, they could significantly improve their effectiveness in all aspects of their functioning and the educational outcomes.

#### **2.5.4 The Zimbabwe and Namibia cases**

The SGBs are a very important structure in the management and administration of affairs across Zimbabwean schools. In Zimbabwe, the law has set its parameters regarding the issue of the SGBs. Chapter 25:04 of the Zimbabwe Education Act 36) (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987) provides for the school development committees (SDCs). The Act stipulates that:



- The responsible authority of every registered school to which a grant is made in terms of section 35 shall establish a committee, to be known as a school development committee.
- As a school development committee, if approved by the Minister, it shall be vested with control of the affairs of the school for which it has been established.
- The composition, functions and procedures of every school development committee shall be prescribed.

Additionally, in Zimbabwe, the Statutory Instrument (S.I.) 379 of 1998 (Minister of Education, Sport and Culture, Zimbabwe, 1998) provides for school development associations for government schools. Compared to South Africa, it can be noted that the composition of the SGBs in Zimbabwean context is slightly different in that learner membership is not included. However, the chairperson of the governing board is a parent governor, just as in South Africa.

The objects of associations according to the Statutory Instrument (S.I.) are that every school development association shall exercise functions conferred upon it by these regulations to achieve the following objects:

- To promote, improve and encourage the development and maintenance of the school;
- To assist in the advancement of the moral, cultural, physical, spiritual, and intellectual welfare of learners at the school;
- To promote and encourage programmes of interest, both educational and social, for the benefit of the learners and their parents and teachers.

Against this background, it follows that in Zimbabwe, the management and administration of schools is controlled by the SDCs and school development associations, the equivalence of the SGBs in the South African context. What is more pleasing to note is that the law in Zimbabwe provides for the efficient management and administration of schools by using viable structures.

In practical terms, SDCs and SDAs can also face some challenges, despite the legal framework. A Zimbabwean study of five neighbouring rural primary schools by Chikoko (2018:2) on the role of parent governors reveals that despite the presence of a legal

decentralised school governance structure in which parents form the majority, they did not have the capacity to function effectively therein, and were still marginalised in school governance decision-making.

Given this situation, the current study intends to investigate the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools; hence, it becomes imperative to understand other factors that may constrain the participation of parents as school governors. Thus, despite some serious constraints, the role of parents in the effective running of schools cannot be overstated.

The research study conducted by Waters and Marzano (2016:4), from the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), found a positive correlation between district leadership and learner achievement. Their meta-analysis of 27 studies, examining the relationship between district-level leadership and learner achievement, identifies five leadership responsibilities or practices that have a statistically significant correlation with learner achievement. All five of these responsibilities relate to setting goals and keeping districts focused on learner performance, and one of the five speaks directly to the SGB's role. In addition, the study reports that districts with higher levels of learner achievement show a clear alignment of board, district and school efforts in support of non-negotiable goals. To this end, the role of the SGBs cannot be overstated, since it has emerged that leadership is central to the effective and smooth running of schools.

According to the Republic of Namibia (2016:5), the main responsibilities of the SGBs are to:

- Develop the vision and policies of their school and recommend staff appointments;
- Develop and maintain the school infrastructure and promote school welfare;
- Communicate with parents/guardians and the community;
- Establish committees for managing and supporting school finance;
- Monitor and support teaching and learning outcomes to ensure a quality education.

Thus, compared to South Africa, the SGBs in Namibia have similar broader roles and functions that can promote teaching and learning processes within schools. Kayumbu (2017:iv) notes that in Namibian schools, school governance became one of the main concerns in supporting quality education. Additionally, Kayumbu (2017:87) highlights that after Independence, the new Namibian Government realised that it was important for all stakeholders in education to participate equally and actively in governing their local schools, and therefore introduced a policy on decentralisation and democratic school governance.

One of the aims of school governance is to promote the empowerment of the local community through the decentralisation of administration and management of their schools. The Namibian Education Act (NEA) (Act 16 of 2001) (Ministry of Education, Namibia, 2001) makes provision that the SGBs can be established in all Namibian public schools. The logic behind the establishment of the SGBs in Southern African countries was to address inequalities and discrimination regarding the provision of quality education that occurred before independence (Chikoko, 2015:34; Kayumbu, 2017:87; Land, 2012:229; Onger, 2015:15). Another aim was to decentralise decision-making processes, transferring authority and distributing resources from the national level to the local school level.

### **2.5.5 The Cameroon, Ghana and Kenya cases**

In West Africa, SGBs play an important role in the management of schools. Thus, the functions and roles are provided for by the relevant Act. The Kenya Education Act [Chapter 211] provides for the establishment of boards of management (BOM) and membership of BOM. This arrangement is analogous to the concept of the SGBs in South Africa as well as the concept of SDCs in the Zimbabwean context.

The Kenya Education Act [Chapter 211] (Laws of Kenya, 2012) stipulates that:

1. It shall be the duty of a school sponsor, for the purposes of ensuring that a recognised school is managed in a spirit of partnership, to appoint members to the board of management, the composition of which is as agreed between sponsors of schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade unions, and staff associations representing teachers and the Minister.

2. A board established in accordance with subsection shall fulfil in respect of the school the functions assigned to that school by this Act, and, except in the case of a school established or maintained by a vocational education committee, each board shall be a body corporate with perpetual succession and power to sue and may be sued in its corporate name.
3. Pending the establishment of a board as provided for by subsection the persons who have responsibilities under the structures and systems in place in a school for the management of that school at the commencement of this part, including boards of governors, shall, as appropriate, discharge the functions of a board under this Act.

Therefore, it follows that in Kenya, the roles and functions of SBGs and the office bearers are clearly stipulated by the Education Act. Thus, it can be concluded that the SGBs are a statutory creation.

In addition, the Ghana Education Act and the Cameroon Education Act recognise the roles of the SGBs and the responsibilities of their members. In both the Education Acts, the key function lies in the overall administration, providing strategic guidance and management of school business to enhance school effectiveness. Compared to South Africa, it can be noted that the SGBs in Cameroon and Ghana have similar mandates and their composition also draws members from mainly parents. Thus, the key roles of the SB and its members are stipulated as to:

- Adapt to the distinctive characteristics of an academic environment and act in a way that exemplifies and reinforces the institution's core values and ethos;
- Oversee all aspects of the school, including its control and accountability systems and approve the expenditure and capital budgets;
- Appoint, review and, in some cases, remove the principal and provide ongoing support and supervision;
- Develop and maintain healthy relationships with key stakeholders including effective communication channels;
- Ensure a strategic approach to the school's future by setting major goals, policy frameworks and strategies, and monitor organisational performance;

- Set the tone and the ethical standards of the school, and monitor adherence to them;
- Review plans and approve budgets established by school management;
- Review and monitor adherence to systems of risk management, governance and legal compliance; and
- Conduct an annual review of the school's progress and performance in meeting its objectives.

Based on the comprehensive and common duties imposed on the SGBs in Ghana and Cameron, it can be concluded that in some instances, society and other stakeholders may tend to have a limited understanding of the elaborate role played by the SGBs. In most situations, boards are perceived as entities whose role is confined to the recruitment and selection of school principals (Independent Schools Victoria, 2017:3).

## **2.6 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THESE CASE STUDIES**

From a consideration of various cases, it would seem that there are similarities and differences regarding the nature, role, functions and composition of the SGBs across the region, continent and the globe respectively. The dominant theme that emerges from all the reviewed cases is that the SGBs are an important and universal structure in public schools. Additionally, the SGBs are a creature of the Constitution and statutes in various nations. It is also imperative to note that the Education laws of the various nations are quite elaborate and comprehensive in explaining and exploring the key functions of the SGBs. It is therefore pleasing to acknowledge that in most cases, the SGBs' roles and functions are centred on strategic guidance and providing an oversight role, which is targeted at promoting school effectiveness. The cases reviewed have most aspects in common when rated against the South African concept of the SGBs.

## **2.7 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Moorosi and Bantwini (2016:5) emphasise that it is vital to understand the concepts, school governance and the SGBs in order to appreciate the significance of the latter in enhancing the effectiveness of schools in South Africa. As Bruce, Brown, and Wiens (2013:5) contend, the school boards are valid and legitimate structures that are responsible for the effective governance of schools. Dollmann (2010:4) argues that it

is important to hold a robust discourse on the definitions of the SGBs in order to understand their roles, responsibilities, goals, principles, and statutory mandate. The SGBs are defined differently by scholars and researchers, depending on their mandate. According to the Republic of Namibia (2016:2), a school board (SB) is an advisory and governing body at the school level. It represents the parents, teachers and learners. It is relevant to the entire school community. The South African Schools Act (1996:4) offers a comprehensive definition of the SGBs as structures that are established to have an oversight role on the management and administration of public schools with a view to promoting the attainment of a quality education for all.

School governance is a broad and contentious concept in both scholarly and practical contexts (Clarke, 2012:9). Governance is defined as the involvement of private citizens in public policy at local and regional levels, and entails a combination of policy-making, implementation and oversight in a formalised collective setting (Graaff, 2014:10). For Chetty and Ngcobo (2010:68), school governance refers to the development and adoption of school policies that are important for the day-to-day running of the school in a democratic way, which, in turn, promotes democratic participation of the stakeholders.

There is no consensus in the current literature on the definition of school governance, since what it constitutes largely depends on the local contexts. From an in-depth review of international practices of school governance, Serero (2016:vi) concludes that the school governance mandate implies that the SGB must provide the school with a strategic direction, act as a critical friend to the school, and hold the school to account. In terms of the South African Schools Act, the SGB should promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school (Serero, 2016:vi).

The SGBs provide an opportunity and a significant process of democratisation in the ways in which schools are governed and managed, because the stakeholders are offered an opportunity to share their views and thoughts, which ultimately leads to shared decision-making (Hofman et al., 2012:249; Holt & Murphy, 2013:175). In this respect, Botha (2014:1) highlights that the former Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, “reassured the education fraternity of the government’s commitment to the self-management and self-governance of South African schools”. However, from a

practical point of view, it is not clear whether the focus of the school governance in South Africa is on school performance improvement or on the financial stability the school. Reasoning that every country has a government, every school needs a 'government' to serve the school and the school community competently and democratically (Hooge & Honingh, 2014:2; Johnson, 2012:83).

In contrast to the notion that there is unanimity on the concept school governance, Msipha (2011:21) asserts that it is difficult to define, because different nations have their own statutory and constitutional interpretations. By implication, the concept of school governance is contextual in the sense that different countries, and educational jurisdictions and settings, have multiple interpretations and views about what it entails and how it should be enacted (Chinsamy, 2012:2). The concept of decentralised school governance is premised on the imperative to devolve more authority over education matters to local school communities (Levin, 2018:254).

The above discussion highlights that there are various reasons why the SGBs have been established. Graaff (2014:6) points out that in the 1990s, the South African policy-makers and advisors perceived parent participation in school governance to be desirable in order to address the aftermath of the apartheid regime. In a way, the SGBs were constituted to achieve the national goal of deepening full democratic participation in schools, promoting effective school governance, and improving learner performance. In essence, the SGBs were established to enhance the parents' voice and commitment in educational matters, and ensure teachers' accountability that in turn should lead to improved learner outcomes (Honingh, Ruiter, & van Thiel, 2018:8).

In this context, school governance is somehow problematic to conceptualise to a 'universal satisfaction', because different people's perceptions of school governance will be differently influenced by their origin's collective narratives and the immediate experiences of current events in their respective environments (Hoffman et al., 2012:249; Burns & Köster, 2016:12).

The South African Schools Act (1996) requires the SGBs to operate at two levels of leadership; namely, managerial and visionary, without infringing upon the traditional leadership of the principal and the school management team (Graaff, 2014:7). The SASA was also established to ensure that the independence and interests of

communities are guaranteed. Drawing from the South African experiences, SASA (RSA, 1996b) sets the broad definition of the concept of school governance to be understood in the context of relevant legislation. The SASA, which guides the governance, management and control of schools in South Africa (Rembe, 2015:179), was formulated and passed by Parliament in 1996. In South Africa, decentralisation of schooling is a product of both historical development and the policy choices made by government since 1994 (Colditz, 2016:9). Similarly, Tsotetsi, Van Wyk, and Lemmer (2008:385) lament that decentralised school governance presupposes a devolvement of power from the central level of government down through the system to the local level. In this sense, school governance seeks to empower the local people to manage the affairs of their own schools.

Prior to 1994, statutory school-level structures were in existence and were known, *inter alia*, as school committees, school boards or management councils (Tsotetsi et al., 2008:385). They consisted of parents and had only limited decision-making powers. Given this situation, it follows that the SGBs in South Africa have a historical experience. In 1996, the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996), hereafter referred to as SASA, was promulgated to provide the guiding principles for education in South Africa; namely, access, redress, equity and democratic governance (Tsotetsi et al., 2008:386). Duku and Salami (2017:112) note that the South African school system allowed for community participation in the administration and management of schools under the system of School Governing Bodies (SGBs).

This view is corroborated by Chikoko (2015:11) who asserts that in Zimbabwe, school governance involves issues related to policy pronouncements and regulatory legislation to set the preferred tone and operational standards of interaction within a given school environment. The implication of these viewpoints is that school governance should not be 'narrowly perceived' to be universal and monolithic in nature and outlook, as it is influenced by the prevailing cultural, social, economic, and political conditions in different nations and communities across the globe (Hess, 2002:16). Therefore, school governance is viewed as the story of how ordinary people eventually "obtain a say in the running of their schools" (Gann, 2018:7). It follows that citizens' understandings of school governance may vary from nation to nation, depending on the prevailing cultural contexts (Johnson, 2012:83).



The softer aspects of governance, such as style and culture, are taken into consideration (Delagardelle, 2018:191). In this regard, governance in schools may constitute the organisational culture and the way school business is dealt with at a particular school. Related to this, are observations in the Lighthouse study by the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) (2011:10) that focused on behavioural aspects of the board and school leaders in districts with unusually high or low-performing learners. The study revealed that boards of districts with high-performing learners have high expectations of their learners and a clear vision of their role in improvement processes.

In etymological terms, the concept of governance is derived from the Latin verb '*gebenare*' or more originally from the Greek word '*kubernaein*', which implies 'to steer' (Kjaer, 2014:5). Additionally, in the Hebrew culture, the term governance is associated with abiding to a set of Jewish political thought, and a set of religious administrative practices. Basing on its etymology, school governance therefore refers to the manner of steering or governing, or of directing and controlling a group of people for the collective development of the school.

In the Muslim world, the **Islamic theory** of governance is grounded on a number of principles that stem from early history, one of which is *al-siyasah-al-shar'iyyah*, meaning the arrangement, management and political wisdom to achieve the fundamental aims of human benefit and protection as well as to carry out good purposes. Additionally, Allah is the source of all the initiatives relating to that governance in the Muslim world (Samier, 2018:90).

In the **Western world**, Massachusetts was the first state to organise the management of local schools by establishing elected school boards in the late 1700s (Land, 2012:229).

The etymological perspective, therefore, illustrates that the meaning of school governance is heavily dependent on a people's historical background, political, socio-cultural and belief systems (Kirst, 2010:3). With respect to school governance, it entails the presence of sound systems, procedures and established structures that facilitate development and regulate the day-to-day operations within a given school system, for the attainment of quality education. In view of the complex functions

prescribed for the SGBs in South African schools, sound training should be provided for the proper discharge of the multiple duties bestowed upon the members of an SGB to avoid the so-called “muddling through” approach (Holt & Murphy, 2013:175).

One of the founders of the field of school governance and the SGBs researcher and CEO of the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools, Colditz (2016:12), offered a broader perspective by defining school governance as relating to all legislative and policy initiatives meant to compliment and augment the smooth running of schools with the aim of promoting academic achievement.

In South Africa, a basic set of functions is stipulated for all the SGBs, and these are summarised in the School Governing Body Induction/Training Manual by the Province of the Eastern Cape Education (2012:40) as follows:

- The SGB should create an environment in which the learner can function optimally; in other words, the environment is conducive to learning;
- A healthy environment with an adequate water supply, which is safe for drinking purposes, and sufficient toilets, which meet hygiene standards;
- An environment where discipline is valued – this refers to a disciplinary code of behaviour, a code that has been developed by the SGB;
- An environment where sound teaching is the order of the day – this refers to the appointment of competent teachers, which is an important function of the SGB, among others.

School governance in South Africa is very comprehensive as it covers a number of critical issues that enhance the effectiveness in schools. Similarly, Boaduo et al. (2009:96) underscore the fact that this governance model was designed to give schools greater autonomy to manage its resources; determine the delivery of educational resources; democratise local control of education decision-making; and respond to community needs. This model of governance is credited for ensuring active community participation, teacher effectiveness, improvement of learner performance, and the general sense of school ownership by the community.

Kayumbu (2017:14) makes a critical observation that school governance has both negative and positive impacts. For Kayumbu (2017:14), in Namibia, negative school

governance refers to the absence of organised collective values among the school authorities' parents and teachers, while positive school governance entails the presence of shared values and the promotion of cooperation and integration, with a view to enhance the effectiveness of schools in pursuit of their mandates. Thus, the implication of this definition is that across South African schools, both negative and positive school governance can be prevalent and in turn, have ripple impacts on the effectiveness of the school system. From these observations, it can be noted that a negative or poor school governance is detrimental to the enhancement of the school's effectiveness, while positive school governance ensures and guarantees the construction of effective systems that promote sustainable quality education.

Developing quality education, cultivating talents, and promoting social, economic and cultural development are the current international trend (Wohlstetter, 1995:23).

In the assessment by Beckham and Wills (2014: 24), positive school governance signifies the presence of desirable and conducive building conditions within a given school environment, and the promotion of the institution's effectiveness through decentralised decision-making. Thus, with regard to this study, these definitions imply that if positive school governance is to be established in South Africa, then there is the need to address the constraints associated with the establishment of the SGBs in the country. It is also necessary to develop transformation mechanisms that enhance the effectiveness of schools systematically.

The preceding discussion shows that school governance has many meanings and is described in several different ways and as such has different definitional overtones. Another central theme that emerged from the many definitions of school governance was that school governance is a shared enterprise that can be collectively attained and renewed. Quality education cannot and will not be attained in isolation; it requires an entire community's participation and support (Republic of Namibia, 2016: 6).

In this study therefore, the term school governance is conceptualised as a collaborative system of managing schools, where the relevant stakeholders are brought together under the auspices of the regulatory framework, policy or enabling Act of Parliament to take part in the collective development of the school with a view to increase the effectiveness of the school in question.

In the context of the Global School Governance Index (GSPI), positive school governance is a major precondition for achieving the levels of cooperation, inclusiveness and social integration that facilitate the successful school management (Karsten, Ledoux, Roeleveld, Felix, & Elshof, 2003:452). Kirst (2010:28) reports that in the USA, over 40 states passed charter school laws between 1991 and 2010 to allow more parental choice and create competition. Such policy and legislative interventions were critical in introducing a form of local governance within schools.

It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the role of the SGBs as an intermediary between government and schools, and particularly the nature and styles of governance employed by various the SGBs to enhance school effectiveness. The significance of the SGBs in improving schools and learners' performance levels is pivotal to driving educational reforms and achieving greater educational quality in the emerging school settings, which makes this study not only relevant to South Africa, but to other similar contexts.

## **2.8 THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES**

The SGBs' roles and functions differ from nation to nation, although there are common goals regarding the emphasis on the need to enhance school effectiveness. The SGBs' crucial role is to ensure that all learners are treated well, without any segregation based on religion, gender, "racial discrimination or any other overtones" (McArdle, Osypuk & Acevedo-Garcia, 2017:1). Thus, the SGBs have a major role to ensure that learners are treated impartially. In support of this view, Johnson (2012:1) notes that:

Men and women of all races are born with the same range of abilities. ...ability is not just the product of birth. Ability is stretched or stunted by the family that you live with, and the neighbourhood you live in, by the school you go to, and the poverty or the richness of your surroundings. It is the product of a hundred unseen forces playing upon the little infant, the child, and finally the man.

The environment has a major influence on the teaching and learning processes at school; and as such, the SGBs' role becomes imperative in curbing any form of segregation. Spatial segregation isolates groups and limits social interaction, and, for children, this isolation occurs during the crucial period when racial attitudes are being

formed (McArdle et al., 2017:2). In this sense, the role of the SGBs in schools is critical as they need to foster a conducive and supportive atmosphere that bridges the gap between the home environment and the school to ensure all children are treated equally.

The connections between the neighbourhood where one grows up, the socio-economic status, and a host of child and adolescent outcomes, have been well documented, including links to behaviour problems, juvenile delinquency, academic achievement, and health (McArdle et al., 2017:3).

Similarly, in a Harvard study, Owens, Reardon, and Jencks (2016:1163) underline that in schools, the interaction between race/ethnicity and income means that in the USA, black and Hispanic learners are often segregated into both racially isolated and high-poverty schools, while public school learners of all races/ethnicities are increasingly in schools with larger shares of low-income learners, where there are clear inequalities according to race/ethnicity. Given this situation in the USA, and which is found across the globe, it justifies the need for the SGBs to provide regulatory mechanisms for dealing with segregation constraints that may impact negatively on academic achievement. The association between segregation and achievement gaps could be explained by differential exposure to school poverty, as achievement gaps between black/Hispanic learners and whites are much higher when they attend schools with higher poverty concentrations (Reardon, 2016:38).

The SGBs play a pivotal role in bringing value consensus and increased integration. McArdle et al. (2017:6) posit that school integration brings benefits beyond achievement gains. Additionally, Hart (2013:12) maintains that

These benefits accrue not only to individuals, but arguably to the economy and civic society as well. Cross-cultural navigational skills are valued in the marketplace, as shown by the overwhelming response of major employers that it is “important” that employees be “comfortable working with colleagues, customers, and/or clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.” The reduction in bias and stereotypes, along with increased empathy and understanding of other races fostered by integrated education, all prepare learners to be better citizens in our increasingly diverse democracy.

Against this background, the SGBs have a fundamental role to ensure that inclusion in schools is positively supported through formulation and implementation of relevant policy. Studies have further noted that Sweden has experienced increased school segregation along socio-economic and ethnic lines since the first decade of the new century, and that between-school variation in school performance has doubled since the late 1990s (Saminathen, Låftman, Almquist & Modin, 2018:466).

One key aspect and role of the SGBs is the need to uphold the school ethos. Musaazi (2016:13) argues that the school is there for the benefit of the community and the community supposed to be there for the school. Therefore, there is a need for the SGBs to harmonise the relationships between the school and the community. Carter (2012:16) notes that there may be a mismatch between a school's official value system and the school's ethos as actually experienced by the staff and learners.

In reinforcing this position, Bruce, Brown, and Wiens (2013:2) state that across nations, the roles for the SGBs are not predetermined from a global standard's point, since they vary according to prevailing conditions in the concerned country. For example, it is noted that in USA, the Washington State Education Reform Act and the Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) have significantly affected the way schools go about educating learners and the way boards hold schools accountable for educating learners (the Washington State School Directors' Association, 2016:23). Such initiatives at policy level are critical, as the provisions of the Acts raise expectations for what the schools will achieve and the guarantees that learners' academic achievement standards will be promoted.

Kirst (2010:29) highlights the K-12 policy in the USA, which entailed an era of school governance, where there were two main goals or bottom lines: improving classroom instruction, and increasing learner achievement or performance. It is reported that the K-12 policy shifted from a primary concern with adults, being the employees of the school system, to learners' outcomes. Against this background, it can be argued that across jurisdictions, the role of SGBs is recognised in different models. What surfaces in these models is the need to enhance academic achievement. K-12 reform has transformed the instructional leadership role of central offices to the support of instructional classroom change (Edsource, 2010:33).

In defending the need for the SGBs, the National School Boards Association (2012:15) provides five (5) reasons why the current system of the SGBs should remain in place:

- a) The board is an elected body that represents the community's beliefs and values: a system "of the people, by the people, and for the people".
- b) The board is an advocate for the community when it comes to decisions in public education.
- c) The board sets a standard for achievement in the district and determines learners' success, while incorporating the community's view of what learners need to know.
- d) The board is accessible by and accountable to the public.
- e) The board is the community's education watchdog.

Given this situation, the watchdog role played by the SGBs is very important, because it ensures that the school principals and their teams are monitored to continue in the parameters that have been agreed upon. Thus, the focus on attaining the best results will always be of prime importance.

The preceding discussion of the literature suggests that each particular nation's context requires specific school governing bodies with roles and functions reflecting the needs and the aspirations of that nation's education system (Bruce, Brown, & Wiens, 2013:2). The relevance of this finding to the present study is that for the envisaged roles and functions of the SGBs in South Africa to be implemented, the set goals have to radiate from the local education system's context. This will assist in addressing hindrances to positive school governance in South Africa, including an analysis of the mismanagement of school resources.

The preceding findings confirm Ford's (2013:129) observation that the roles of the SGBs have widened as teachers in different environments try to promote efficiency and effectiveness of schools. Racial and ethnic segregation are often more extensive in schools than in the residential areas surrounding them (Saporito & Sohoni 2016:81). Given these circumstances, it can be argued that the SGBs are vital to deal with matters of racial and ethnic segregation in schools. Such segregation may result in other ripple effects, among them possibly ability tracking, which then has an impact on academic achievement (Dollmann, 2010:67). Research has revealed that in school systems that deploy ability tracking across various schools, the majority and minority

members are usually unequally distributed across tracks, consequently intensifying ethnic segregation across schools (Gramberg, 2018:547). This may affect the level of access to certain schools by the minority, although access to schools had been regulated in South Africa, as parents may prefer schools closer to their homes, and may require the SGBs to regulate and provide mechanisms to ensure equitable access. Parental choices are usually restricted to schools located a short distance from their homes, even if they are free to choose more distant ones (Burgess, Lupton & Wilson, 2014:15; Karsten et al., 2003:452).

In the USA, the Washington State School Directors' Association (2016:3) points out that as publicly-elected officials and members of their local communities, school board members are uniquely positioned to:

- Create a community-wide, shared vision and set goals for how the district improves learner achievement;
- Create the conditions and direct the resources for accelerating improvement;
- Hold the system accountable to high and equitable achievement for all learners; communicate needs and progress of learners to the community; and
- Build the public will to improve the potential performance of all learners and succeed in reaching the district's learner achievement goals.

Against this background, it is argued that the SGBs have a major role in allocating resources, development of policy, and setting out the vision and standards for academic achievement with a focus of increasing and enhancing school effectiveness.

The roles identified above point to a need for societal change and transformation that facilitates the establishment of more effective school governance structures. One of the most important functions of South African governing bodies is the provision to set a budget and recommend school fees as part of the budgeting process (Bush & Heystek, 2013:130). Ford (2013:129) concludes that traditional school boards can and do influence academic outcomes, implying that improving school board governance is a legitimate approach to improving academic achievement.

It follows that the SGBs are mainly focused on providing school authorities with direction and professional guidance needed in addressing school governance



problems. As reflected in their many goals, the SGBs guide people about 'how to run the schools' (Andrews & Brewer, 2014:190). In this regard, a culture of school governance should thus be promoted through the transformation of mindsets of school authorities, parents, teachers, and learners (Hooze & Honingh, 2014:16). In this respect, the SGBs create the conditions that facilitate the realisation of the primary aim of the schools to enhance the effectiveness of schools through the provision of quality services. School principals are expected to emerge as leaders with a clear vision for their school, in order to make it competitive in the school-of-choice landscape (Böhlmark & Lindahl, 2012:74). It follows that the SGBs are important in setting and regulating the standards for school principals so as to promote quality education.

This entails that the SGBs promote changes in the way the teaching and learning processes are handled as well as the way stakeholders perceive their co-existence at any given school. In a study conducted by Hofman et al. (2012:264), which focuses on the board's structure, composition and culture, the authors conclude that involving people from outside the board in decision-making has a positive indirect effect on learners' math scores and their well-being.

In Alsbury's (2018:222) view, the ultimate goal of the SGBs is to develop ethical and responsible citizens, committed to build and develop their own schools. Such SGBs' roles are in tandem with the principles of the Global Education Charter, which stresses the building of strong, sustainable school governance structures across the globe (the Washington State School Directors' Association, 2016:4). This is planned to be achieved through the establishment of structures in schools that focus on upholding school governance ideals to enhance effective service provision. In this sense, the SGBs form part of a pivotal strategy for creating what Andrews and Brewer (2014:19) refer to as "a more effective and efficient school system". This is consistent with the central objective of this study, which seeks to investigate the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. According to Lorentzen (2013:35), school boards set policies, create conditions, and distribute resources for improving learners' performance and achievement. Additionally, they provide the structure for public accountability. This paves the way for the local community's participation in school business in an effort to achieve improved learner performance.

These knowledge functions are critical, as they help the relevant stakeholders in a school system to understand the dynamics of the SGBs in their quest to enhance the effectiveness of schools in South Africa. The SGBs are expected to develop skills on cultural awareness, active participation, tolerance, collective decision-making and problem-solving and build a positive relationship between the school authorities and parents. This creates a sense of collective consciousness among the parties involved and a commitment to effective school governance.

In a study conducted by Hofman et al. (2012:265) on school governance, culture and learner achievement, it is revealed that coherence between school governors, school leaders, teachers, and the school community (parents) produces a sense of community that in turn, shapes conditions in schools, and which have a positive effect on learners' achievements.

The differential effects of schooling in public education are influenced by the nature of school governance prevailing at any given school. Teddlie and Reynolds (2010:134) state that school governance effects tend to be more substantial in school systems that make use of governance structures, which allow individual schools more autonomy.

Moyo (2012:16) points out that in addition to the shared knowledge of running the school business, SGBs have the latent functions of enhancing attitudinal roles of empathy, solidarity, equity and a sense of teamwork, which are useful in the building of strong and democratic school environments. These roles are important to a country with a challenging past and an unequal education system such as South Africa, which is working hard to build positive and effective school governance systems. School boards have always recognised the improvement of learner achievement as central to their role in governing the public schools (Land, 2012:229).

From such observations, it can be deduced that the SGBs have great potential in changing school authorities' and parents' mindsets and to aim for the attainment of higher levels of positive school governance. School governance has been decentralised to enable schools to respond to diverse and local demands (Burns & Köster, 2016:25). In essence, the SGBs promote a culture of school governance, which has been identified as the most essential ingredient for achieving the attainment

of best results in schools in accordance with the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Besides the intangible goals the SGBs have to put in place and guard, the SGBs must also raise money to supplement the State's contribution (Colditz, 2016:6). Therefore, the SGBs have a role to initiate fundraising interventions to assist schools financially.

Honingh et al. (2018:1) add that school boards have a central position in educational governance in that they have to guarantee quality, monitor results and intervene if needed. The main role of the SGBs is to build a culture of school governance through the management of the school's business. In institutions of learning, including primary and secondary schools, the SGBs aim at developing the schools' infrastructure and other related initiatives that promote the entire schools' image. One area where governing bodies may be able to make a difference, relates to what is often described as the absence of a culture of teaching and learning in many schools (Bush & Heystek, 2013:129).

This shows that through the SGBs, learners are exposed to strategies that indirectly and directly promote the effective understanding of their subject matter. Learners should develop the capacity to respond constructively to initiatives that are the result of the SGBs' interventions and projects. School boards – as policy-makers – have a critical role in ensuring that learners learn what they have to learn to turn into productive citizens and that they are able to demonstrate that knowledge on state and local measures of achievement (Gann, 2018:1).

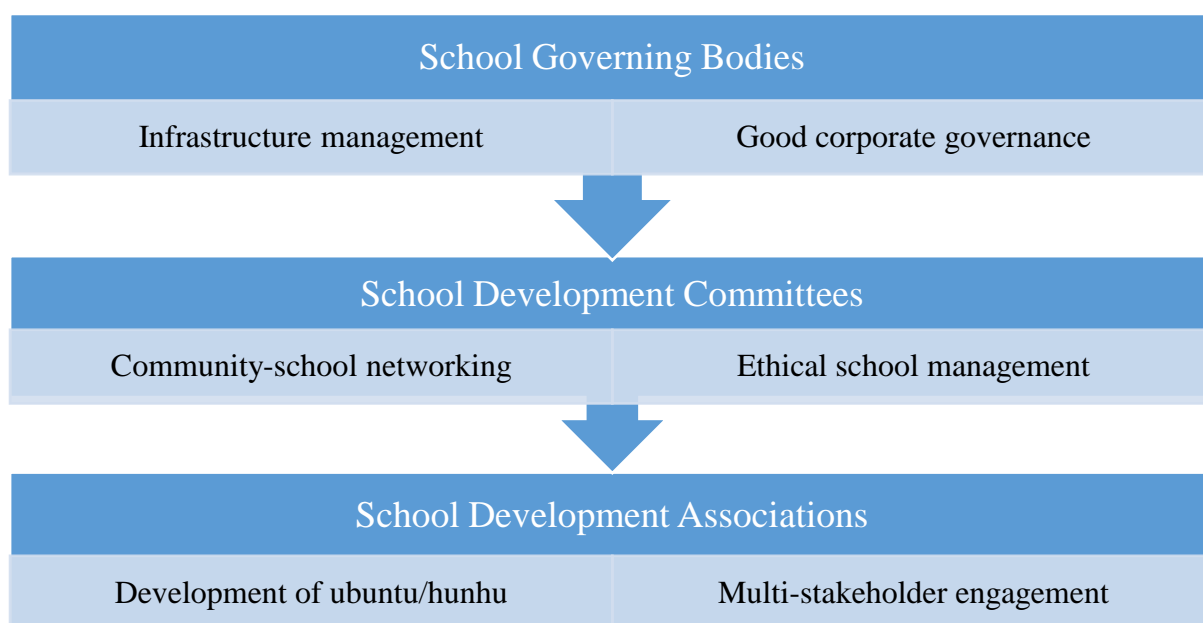
The discussion of the SGBs' roles and functions above illustrates that the SGBs' main mission is to expose learners to the fact that the SGBs play a fundamental role in influencing the teaching and learning processes within schools for everyone's benefit, including the learners'.

Coinciding with an increased autonomy, the SGBs' accountability for educational quality has increased. They are accountable for the performance of their schools and are therefore expected to monitor and enhance the quality of teaching at their schools (Hooge & Honingh, 2014:16). This is consistent with observations by the National Board Schools Association (2012:3) that in the USA, the SGBs were hailed for their

ability to positively affect the quality of teaching and learning processes for the good of the learners' well-being at the schools.

The utility of the SGBs is thus seen in its role in cultivating positive attitudes towards the attainment of set best standards in schools, which assists and motivates learners to perform better (Brookover & Lezotte, 1999:13).

The roles and functions of the SGBs show that they contribute to the development of democratic environments in schools that lead to the creation of informed and active citizens with a unity of purpose. Holt and Murphy (2013:176) maintain that since many interest groups are represented on the governing body, everyone involved must learn how to respect the opinions of others and how to make decisions together. The SGBs are therefore relevant to all societies, also in South Africa, as they are focused on enhancing the effectiveness of schools. The figure that follows makes an attempt to illustrate the key roles of the SGBs.



**Figure 2.1: Summary of key roles of the SGBs**

A study conducted by Christie (2006:290) on the assessment of stakeholder relationships reveals that the potentially conflictual nature of relationships between management, teachers, learners, and parents has negative effects on the school and the performance by learners. They further point to the lack of respect or cooperation, lack of motivation, commitment and discipline among the different stakeholders. Given

this situation, it follows that the role of the SGBs may be negatively affected, and hence, their effectiveness may be compromised.

The effectiveness of schools is viewed as related closely to the educational culture of the school that represents factors such as the teachers' expectations and the degree of academic pressure on learners and the emphasis on basic skills (Hofman et al., 2012:266).

A discussion of the SGBs' roles and functions demonstrates that there is an urgent need to establish the specific needs, roles and concerns of a community where the SGBs are established. The implication of this is that for the objectives of the SGBs to be realised, their operations have to be aligned with the specific needs, requirements and contexts of a particular society where the SGBs are set up (Levy & Shumane, 2017:113). Shober and Hartney (2014:11) argue that 'although there is virtually no research that explicitly links the SGB capacity to a district's academic outcomes, research on non-profit organisations suggests that a link between board capacity and organisational performance is likely. Accordingly, the following section examines some of the key themes related to the SGBs' compositions that have evolved in different parts of the world.

## **2.9 THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES' MEMBERSHIP**

The composition of governing bodies is similar in most countries, comprising parents, teachers, community representatives, and the principal (Bush & Heystek, 2013:132). It is evident from this discussion that the SGBs comprised several components and constituents. Additionally, researchers and scholars acknowledge that the SGBs embrace a number of arms and parts with different roles (Republic of Namibia, 2016:6). However, it can be argued that any differences in the SGBs' composition then exist because of the different roles they seek to perform. This suggests that the SGBs in different environments may have been constituted differently in order to deal with diverse school needs and imperatives.

### **2.9.1 Key Features of Governing Bodies**

In South Africa, Bush and Heystek (2013:131) stress the following key features of the SGBs:

- South Africa provides for learner membership in secondary schools;
- Parents constitute the majority of the governing body in South Africa;
- The governing body chair must be a parent governor;
- Co-opted members have voting rights in the UK, but not in South Africa.

One of the reasons why some SGBs have different members who constitute the board is that people drawn from different fields of expertise have different knowledge, competencies and skills that are required to enhance the effective school governance. Within the governing body, the talents of many will be combined to make the best decisions for the school (Codrington, 2012:179).

As to the composition of the SGBs, it is important to note that board members can be either elected or appointed. In Belgium, the UK and the USA, at least some board members are elected, while the SGBs in the Netherlands and the boards of most academies are appointed (Honingh et al., 2018:4).

A common theme that surfaces from the literature is that in order to constitute effective SGBs, it is imperative to consult all sections of people in any given community and constitute/establish boards that reflect the needs and expectations of the school 'clients'. Bisschoff and Phakoa (1999:67) link the inclusion of learners on governing bodies to wider democratic ideals, as set out in the 1996 South African Schools Act, which recognises learners as an important group of stakeholders, and highlights the need to include them in the decision-making process in public secondary schools. To this end, it can be argued that the effectiveness of the SGBs is guaranteed, since learners as beneficiaries of teaching and learning outcomes are also included.

Countries such as Australia, the UK, the Netherlands and some districts in the USA have developed guidelines, Codes of Conduct, and recruitment profiles for the SGB members, which are believed to indirectly improve the quality of education (Hess, 2002:34; OECD, 2014:56) by setting higher standards for the SGB members. Against this background, one may underscore that the selection and composition of the SGBs must be transparent to the concerned community. An example of this is the culture of selecting members for the SGBs in South Africa, which places more emphasis on transparency, professionalism and integrity as key attributes of those aspiring to serve in the SGBs (Joubert & Bray, 2017:43). However, on another dimension, it has been

noted that the relationship between the SGBs and the superintendent or the principal is essential to educational quality (Andrews & Brewer, 2014:76; Johnson, 2012:93). One of the key issues of the SGB composition is the need for the SGBs to have a visionary leadership that is competent and effective.

The composition of the SGB members needs to be related to the prevailing school requirements and the subsequent school governance problems in the concerned society. In line with this, Serero (2016:21) emphasises that due diligence must be observed and upheld when constituting the SGBs to take on board experienced, knowledgeable and capable individuals, as these individuals will have to ensure their meaningful contribution to the effective running of schools.

In an attempt to explore the magnitude of school effectiveness compared to the nature of school boards, Delagardelle (2018:198) conducted a study that compared the SGBs in districts that do well, with districts that do less well, to identify seven differences between boards that are related to bringing about positive change and improvement. The study identified critical variables at play; namely, connections across the system, knowing what it takes to change performance or achievement, workplace support, professional development, a balance between district-wide direction and building-level autonomy, a strong community connection, and distributed leadership. Given this list of requirements, the board members' perceptions, knowledge, behaviour, and attitudes towards the need to strengthen the quality of education is critical for all schools.

Gann (2018:34) believes that while establishing, electing, and constituting the SGBs, it is necessary to consider the issues that preoccupy a specific school, so that the structures are acceptable and relevant. It follows that the SGBs have to be aligned to the social and cultural context and the needs of the community.

In support of the expertise needed for members of the SGBs, Quality Education Commission, Oregon (2018:8) notes that within schools, there is a need for a system grounded in a shared vision, based on a set of principles and processes adapted to the particular school's circumstances. At the centre of the shared vision system are effective teachers, surrounded by support systems that allow learning to happen,

which include strong and stable leadership by principals and teacher leaders, and coordinated support by other staff, community partners, and parents.

It is thus important to select members with different skills to constitute the SGBs to capacitate it to be successful in its role. It also explains why the SGBs have been drawing their membership from people with the required expertise and in particular, those coming from the local area (House of Commons Education Committee, 2013:5). In a study conducted by Shoher and Hartney (2014:56) to establish the role of leadership in the SGBs, it is concluded that professional experience shapes the board members' capacity. However, it is also noted that board members whose professional background is in public education (e.g., former teachers or other school system employees) are less knowledgeable about true district conditions than their counterparts who are not former teachers. Thus, it is argued that there is a need to have a mixture of skills and experience represented in the membership in order to strike a balance as well as aiding the roles of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness.

Saunders (2010:11) identifies the following key characteristics or correlates of effective schools and effective teaching:

- Professional leadership;
- A learning environment;
- Purposeful teaching/achievement orientation;
- Monitoring progress;
- A learning organisation;
- Learners' rights and responsibilities; and
- A home-school partnership.

Khuzwayo (2017:v) investigated the role relationships of the SGB chairpersons and principals in school governance in selected primary and secondary schools in the KwaMashu area of KwaZulu-Natal, and finds that the SGB chairpersons and principals appeared to have an understanding of their own and each other's roles. However, it is also noted that a deeper examination of such claim suggests that this apparent clarity is superficial. It emerges that inexperienced governing body chairpersons and principals lacked an adequate understanding of their governance roles and those of



each other. It follows that within the SGBs, it is necessary for the members to appreciate their core roles. In light of this study, it follows that the SGBs' role in enhancing school effectiveness may have a connection to the prevailing interactions between the SGB members.

### **2.9.2 Requirements for the School Governing Bodies**

In order to fulfil their oversight role over schools for which they have been constituted, it is critical that the SGBs should conduct their business in a professional manner. To this end, it is imperative that staff development or capacity development of all relevant stakeholders should be prioritised. In this regard, the House of Commons Education Committee (2013:5) states, "In order to improve the quality of governance in all schools, the government must stress the importance of continuing professional development for all governors and head teachers."

In light of the above discussion, it is vital that parents, teachers and governors serving on the SGBs should be trained adequately on how to perform their governance and supervisory roles effectively. Such training can incorporate some 'best practices' of how schools should be managed to improve their effectiveness.

Furthermore, transparency and accountability are important aspects in leading the SGBs. In a study that assessed the state of primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe, Chakanyuka, Chung and Stevenson (2009:125) indicated that transparency was an important principle that enabled parents to know exactly how their money was being spent. Therefore, there is a need for regular auditing and stocktaking of the operations of the SGBs in various transactions. Accountability requires those in care of school funds to be responsible. It enables parents to feel more comfortable with paying additional sums of money for their children's education (Harris, 2010:3). Accountability is another key factor in establishing and maintaining quality education and quality assurance in schools. According to Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, (2018:40), accountability is often defined as "calling upon individuals or groups to answer for deeds or omissions".

The implication in relation to participation in the SGBs is that all stakeholders in school governance transactions have to give account for whatever they do, irrespective of the intention or the outcome of actions. Quality assurance in schools cannot be divorced

from the notion of accountability, for it is imperative that schools deliver quality education that displays the level of accountability to both the State and the community by producing learners who are holistically competent (Ndawi & Peresuh, 2015:210).

Creese and Earley (2018:8) identify six features of effective SGBs, namely working as a team; having a good relationship with principals; effective time management and delegation; holding effective meetings; knowledge of the school; and training and development of school governors. The purpose of the SGBs is to build effective partnerships and working relationships with all the relevant stakeholders to enable the schools to function effectively, and to meet the community's and national needs (Van Wyk, 2014:49). The SGBs should be accommodative of each other and build their strengths on what each member's level of expertise and experiences brings to the team of school governors. Furthermore, the SGB members who are professionals with financial, legal and managerial skills should be willing to share their knowledge with those who are inexperienced in these areas; hence, the call for partnerships and capacity building. In this way, Van Wyk (2014:50) notes, "the State hopes to build a framework for the governance of schools, which is characterised by power sharing among parents, teachers and the community in order to support the core values of democracy and contribute to more effective schools." If all the relevant stakeholders in school governance respond positively to the educational reforms, then they would witness the effective, efficient and functional operations of their schools.

## **2.10 SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES AND THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In this section, the relevant key working Acts in the study are explained. The focus is on the identification of the emerging issues related to the SGBs and establishing the extent to which the SGBs enhance school effectiveness in general.

### **2.10.1 South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996**

The preamble of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA) states:

... this country requires a new national system for schools, which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality

for all learners and in so doing, lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities..." (Serero, 2016:12).

In order to achieve the educational goals of the country, the families and individual learners, it is crucial that all schools have to provide high quality education to all learners. It, therefore, stands to reason that the SGBs become relevant in playing the oversight role in the attainment of such quality education. In terms of SASA, a school governing body comprises the following members: parents, learners, teachers, and non-teaching staff. To see to it that the objectives of the provision of high quality education and good governance are achieved, the schools need to work collaboratively with the governing bodies and all other relevant stakeholders. In this regard, Msipha (2011:43) posits that "...[the] SASA is one of the school reform policies aimed at democratising and improving school education by decentralising responsibilities and powers to schools, thereby promoting democratic governance of schools by the SGBs".

The Act seeks to make sure that there is a uniform system governing schools. SASA sets out the laws for governance and funding of schools. The Act recognises that a new national system for schools is needed to redress past injustices and inequalities. It supports the rights of learners, teachers and parents, and spells out the duties and responsibilities of the State. In an attempt to rebuild the South African education system, when the new government of national unity came to power in 1994, "an education system ensuring equal education opportunities in a unitary, non-racial and democratic South Africa" was established (Mafumo, 2010:16). The official abolition of segregation in schools was expressed and enacted through the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act No. 108 of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) and the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA) (RSA, 1996b). Serero (2016:22) further states that it will be the goal of education and training policy to enable a democratic, free, equal, just and peaceful society to enjoy the fruits of equality.

Within the context of this study, shared decision-making is regarded as an indication of transformation from a discriminatory minority education system to a single democratic one. The key pillars identified for playing a prominent role in the new education dispensation include the constitutional and educational context of South Africa, public school governance, and equality and diversity.

From a different viewpoint, Sayed (2018:8) states that “the Ministry of Education and the South African Government have tended not to grant stakeholder bodies decision-making powers. Instead, such bodies in the South African context were accorded mainly advisory powers.” This indicates that the government in power is giving only partial authority to school governors, meaning that the government and the Department of Basic Education still retain the authoritative roles in education governance. Thus, the Minister of Education, according to the outcomes of the Constitutional Court, “has the constitutional power to issue national norms and standards over and above provincial” or even school wishes (Sayed, 2018:9). The downside of this principle is that the strong forms of government may intimidate the stakeholders with on advisory powers to such an extent that there could be lack of active or innovative participation in the SGBs. On the other hand, a strong regulatory environment aims at guaranteeing the same high standards of a quality education across all schools.

### **2.10.2 Evaluation of the SGBs’ Legislative and Policy Framework in South Africa**

This section presents an evaluation of the policies in the South African education system. The constraints relating to the formulation of the policies will be highlighted. The challenges facing public schools, despite the revolutionary policy framework, still remain to a large degree those that faced South African schooling more than two decades ago (Chinsamy, 2012:1).

According to Rembe (2015:2):

The policies of apartheid were based on several major pillars: The Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act, the Land Act, the Separate Amenities Act, and the Bantu Education Act. These pillars of apartheid controlled and dictated virtually all aspects of people’s lives, including their places of residence, ownership of property, movement, access to social and recreational amenities, access to educational facilities, rights of association, and franchise rights. This social engineering of apartheid – separateness – secured a virtual monopoly of power – political, economic, etc. for whites.

Against this background, it can be argued that the policies that were available to other races in South Africa prior 1994 were what one would call ‘policies of discrimination’

that prescribed grouping and exclusion. The principle of 'divide and rule' became the order of the day in South African politics, and all discrimination was supported by the laws of the land. For instance, the Bantu Education Act that was enacted in 1953 "ensured that the majority of African children received education that relegated them to unskilled manual labour and low status jobs" (Rembe, 2015:3). On the other hand, white children were able to receive well-structured quality education that equipped them for an "almost complete monopoly of dominant positions in society" (Rembe, 2015:3). Consequently, white schools were allocated more funds than other racial groups in the apartheid era, which was one of the key disadvantages of racial discrimination.

According to Rembe (2015:6), the key policy proposals advanced by the ANC and the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) were:

- The creation of a single national system of education with four levels of governance (national, provincial, local and institutional);
- The establishment of statutory bodies at national and provincial levels so that a wider range of stakeholders can participate in the development of educational policy.

It follows that there was and still is a need for a policy shift that aims at addressing the imbalances and exclusion challenges of the past. Such a paradigm shift in policy has to take cognisance of the need to set up policies that empower the SGBs to address the issues of past discriminatory practices.

In addition, Rembe (2015:7) notes that the proposals made by the National Party (NP) prior to 1994 included the following:

- The creation of a single, but highly decentralised national system of education;
- The provision of increased parental choice through an emphasis on privatisation of schools; and
- The redistribution of educational resources to equalise the expenditures for schools serving whites and non-whites.

The majority of the policy proposals put forward by the ANC, the MDM and NP were adopted after the 1994 elections and the advent of democracy. Rembe (2015:7) states

that “the principles that guided the new government’s transformation process and education policy formulation efforts were outlined as the following principles:

- Equity and redress: Ensuring that all forms of unjust differentiation are removed and equal opportunities are provided to all South Africans;
- Democratisation: Ensuring that democratic, representative and participatory governance prevails;
- Quality: Setting educational standards and ensuring that they are maintained in conformity with transformative norms, standards and ideals of excellence;
- Development: Making certain that the educational system is transformed to enable it to contribute to the common good of society;
- Effectiveness and efficiency: Ensuring that desired outcomes or objectives are achieved without unnecessary duplication or waste;
- Institutional autonomy: Ensuring that organisational choice and self-regulation are embraced and maintained.”

The post-1994 elections in South Africa witnessed a shift and reform from a racially segregated education system with unequal resource allocation to a more desegregated and equal one. According to Moorosi and Bantwini (2016:5), the following aspects were included in the new education system:

- Democratic governance and democratising relations within and outside of the State;
- Establishing of sound management systems at national and provincial levels to drive reforms;
- Reviewing and strengthening resource allocation on the basis of redress and equity at all levels;
- Taking the discourse of the education policy and reform into the public arena for debate and discussion;
- Transforming learning by offering a curriculum that would shape future possibilities for education and training.

Despite these milestones, there are still some setbacks that cause these policies not to reach the desired outcome, which should be an equal and fair opportunity for all South African citizens and residents. It follows that the role and functions of the SGBs

in the South African education system becomes important to achieve all the stated goals in the reform process. At a local level, the SGBs could bridge the gaps between national policy and local cultural values and thus provide locally adopted solutions that may minimise potential constraints. Rembe (2015:8) states that the current education policies have maintained inequities along class lines with a lack of articulation of such challenges within the policies. This is because the new education policies allow schools to maintain their governing and decision-making powers. While these decisions cannot be made on the basis of race, according to the Constitution, the autonomy of schools regarding their decision-making powers can be a perpetrator of social inequalities in South African schools.

## **2.11 THE ROLES AND COMPLEXITIES OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES**

This section explores the complex tasks the SGBs deal with in South African public schools. Despite the efforts to equalise educational opportunities and provide access to quality education in South African public schools, inequality of opportunities remains disconcertingly high. It is often argued that these disparities are due to problems experienced with the implementation of new policies in schools. However, the overall management and administration of schools deserves to be given the due recognition and primacy it deserves. Thus, the important functions and roles of the SGBs cannot be overstated. Others, however, criticise the functions and roles of the SGBs. Mncube (2018:78) states that “instead of inhibiting the inequalities of apartheid in South Africa, school governing bodies (SGBs) tend to aggravate the inequalities of power relations, race, gender and socio-economic class”. For instance, some SGBs in privileged schools charging prohibitive fees to deny poorer learners’ admission. According to Karl Marx, society will always be punctuated by class struggles and segregations that are founded along economic lines, leading to the formation of classes of the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ (Ritzer, 2009:27; Anderson & Taylor, 2010:39). Thus, social class and economic power rather than racial segregation may well remain a factor in all countries where school fees are charged and thus, discriminate against poorer families. The only solution would be to divide the education system into private (fee-paying) schools and public schools, which would be free for all to attend. However, such system would only be feasible in a country with a strong economy, where taxes could carry the cost of such system.

Mncube (2018:78) advances that the SGBs of schools that select specific social classes, tend to raise their school fees and academic expectations to a level that will make it difficult for a child from disadvantaged communities to be accepted into these schools. While there is evidence of more young people having access to and success in education, this has not happened at a required scale (Mayer, Warmerlink, & Bekerbrede, 2011:12).

In previously disadvantaged black schools, the SGBs perform their school governance functions to meet their unique challenges. The way these SGBs operate is a reflection of the socio-economic segregation that exists in South Africa and all countries where school fees are charged. To address this challenge, King (2010:v) conducted studies in an effort to look for ways that the SGBs in historically disadvantaged schools can be on a par with their wealthier counterparts to enhance effective school management. There is obviously still a need to overcome the existing imbalances and disparities to promote effectiveness of schools.

The Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, reiterates that in South Africa,

...a strong SGB, powered by an influential parental component, renders both plausible and realistic President Jacob Zuma's undertaking to the nation that 'education will be a key priority' for the nation ... treating the SGB elections as a priority will help the South African education system in further improving performance and the quality of passes ever possible (Colditz, 2016:12, 13).

Joubert and Bray (2017:2) highlights a key challenge to the management of South African education in which most of the structures, processes, and systems inherited from the pre-democratic past are inappropriate. Furthermore, Msipha (2011:23) notes that there are still "no clear-cut relationships between the democratic SGBs and school improvement, and that the relationship between the two can best be understood, based on critical analysis that specifies the context within which democratic SGBs promote school improvement".

Various studies have shown that there is a strong positive correlation between active involvement by and support from parents and the community towards learning and learner achievement (Jeynes, 2015:25; McBride & Lin, 2016:7). The SGBs have so much influence that they can help raise learners' achievement, if they put their focus



on proper school governance, and teaching and learning. The previous Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Mr Enver Surty, echoed the same sentiment about the SGBs when he stated that they "... have an important role to play in ensuring the accountability at schools" (Republic of South Africa, 1997:15). The then Deputy Minister added that each school should have a performance plan to help in monitoring the performance of the SGBs and gauge the intervention strategies that are put in place. In this regard, there is a need for some checks and balances to ensure that the SGBs fulfil their statutory functions and roles to enhance the effectiveness of schools. Additionally, Mafumo (2010:14) details the 'Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy' which highlights 10 constitutional values, among them values such as democracy, social justice, equity, equality, non-racism, respect and reconciliation. According to Mafumo (2010:15), these constitutional values, in turn, guide both the practice and the spirit of governance and teaching at all South African schools towards racial integration. Against this background, it follows that the observance of these constitutional values is imperative in order to safeguard the basic/fundamental entitlements of children in the education sector.

Several researchers have conducted studies on the roles and complexities of the SGBs, but little research has been conducted thus far in comparing how the SGBs operate in different school contexts. Another factor that ought to be examined is whether there is an unequal provision of resources by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) between historically disadvantaged black and all other public schools in South Africa. It is generally believed that most people perform better in well-funded schools because of the availability of adequate teaching and learning resources. In this case, the former Model C schools are generally well funded because of charging high school fees, and thus are better off in terms of physical facilities, educational resources, financial resources and overall effectiveness.

Efforts to reduce disparities between historically disadvantaged 'black' and other public schools have provoked some controversy. Lekalakala (2016:14) contends that "apartheid education resulted in the emergence of a superior system of education for whites and an inferior one for the non-whites." According to Karl Marx, politics and education are inseparable (Haralambos & Holborn, 2012:23; Ritzer, 2009:16). Even though the new democratic laws and policies have been established, implemented,

and enacted, the scars of that era are still extant, particularly in the rural areas and schools serving informal settlements.

The research findings by Leibbrandt, Wegner and Finn (2011:10) suggest that the academic achievement of learners displays the high level of inequality in South African schools and reflects segregation according to socio-economic lines. It is noteworthy that these studies reveal that the capabilities of learners seem to have decreased rather than increased, suggesting that increased spending has not translated into an increase in the quality of education provision. There is a great need for the roles of the SGBs to be redefined and to undergo further scrutiny in an effort to deal with the factors that may constrain learners on economic and language lines.

## **2.12 EMPIRICAL, ACADEMIC AND SCHOLARLY STUDY FINDINGS ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES**

Various studies relating to the subject under investigation have been conducted by scholars and academics. As such, this section provides a discussion of such studies to establish the relationships and linkages and draw some insights that can inform the current study. A study by Onger (2015:xii) in Kajiado county in Kenya, focusing on the effectiveness of boards of management in facilitating quality education in secondary schools, established that most of the Board of Management (BOM) members were not effectively involved in financial management. The study revealed that their effective participation in the provision of physical facilities and material resources in the schools had improved learning conditions in the schools. In addition, it was further noted that the BOM members were effective in roles such as counselling, maintaining discipline among the staff and learners as well as motivating teachers and non-teaching staff, and providing finances for teachers to attend refresher courses.

This implies that the instrumental role of the SGBs in Kenya was evident. This study, therefore, seeks to establish the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. Particular attention will be given to establish the link in the findings, if any can be found. In terms of recommending strategies for improving the SGBs' effectiveness, it was recommended that government should provide the BOMs with training so as to enhance their skills in the recruitment and selection of the staff, and in this manner ensure that the schools attract only the best talents (Onger,

2015:87). In a South African study conducted by Looyen (2010:iii) to establish the extent to which principals of schools in Gauteng were implementing cooperative school governance, it was shown that the SGBs are the vehicles driving the process of democracy and accountability in schools. In this regard, it can be argued that democracy and accountability are critical in any learning encounters. Once there is true democracy, it would follow that teachers and learners are free to innovate and collaboratively interact for the benefit of attaining quality teaching and learning outcomes. A renowned philosopher, John Dewey (2012:89), argued more than 100 years ago that 'education is democracy' and 'democracy is education'. In this regard, it can be argued that there exists a dialectical link between the two concepts.

The study conducted by Looyen (2010:143) further establishes that in South Africa, principals require more experience with cooperative governance as they are cautious about implementing any new policy relating to school governance. In addition, parents are not always playing an active role in schools as they perceive themselves to be insufficiently equipped to deal with school matters. Given this situation, it can be argued that these perceptions constrain and negatively affect the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness. This current study comes on the backdrop of a related study by Looyen (2010:145) in which it is recommended that the creation of a climate for change and the empowerment of the community to develop competencies in cooperative governing body skills and increasing parent participation are cited as fundamental pillars in strengthening the effectiveness of the SGBs in South Africa, as a lack of such skills also inhibits parental involvement. This study seems to be in agreement with Onger's (2015:88) study, which highlights that principals and governors are in need of intensive training to ensure that cooperative governance is realised.

A similar study was conducted by Mutero (2013:iv) in the Waterberg District of South Africa to explore parental involvement in issues of school governance. Notably, the study findings reveal that there is a lack of understanding and no shared vision between teachers and parents in the SGB. In addition, the study states that the problem underpins other 'more symptomatic problems', such as a lack of accountability in the matter of school finances, differences in understanding the roles

of school board members, and a lack of parents' motivation from the school management.

These problems have negative ripple effects on the school effectiveness, and the role of the SGBs will be negatively affected. The current study aimed to bring to the fore the role of the SGBs on enhancing school effectiveness in South Africa. It can therefore be highlighted that parental non-involvement in school governance may lead to 'weak' SGBs as reflected by Mutero (2013:iv), irrespective whether such non-involvement is caused by a lack of skills, lack of motivation, or lack of discipline to regularly attend to the tasks demanded for and by the SGBs. The current study thus intends to establish the linkages surrounding the involvement of parents and subsequent relationship and impact on the SGBs.

Kayumbu (2017:iv) conducted a study to explore the challenges of school board members in supporting quality education in Ohangwena rural schools in Namibia. This study's findings are partly applicable to the current study, since they inform on constraints faced by schoolboard members in the quest to promote quality education. The current study aimed to establish the role the SGBs in South Africa play in enhancing the effectiveness of schools, with a major thrust on attainment of quality education. In his observations, Kayumbu (2017:iv) notes that the major findings largely confirm previous studies' findings in the Namibian and South African contexts. Study findings reveal that the SGB members experience numerous challenges, such as a poor understanding of their (school board members') powers and functions; poor training of the SGB members; a lack of knowledge and skills; and the need for remuneration of the parent SGB members so that they would feel motivated to attend and appreciated.

Against this background, the current study is strongly informed by the findings highlighted by Kayumbu (2017:76) on the basis that the role of the SGBs in South Africa may be directly or indirectly influenced by the identified challenges. In proposing prescriptive counter measures, Kayumbu (2017:147) recommends that the parent SGB members should be given a 'sitting allowance' after meetings to keep them motivated to attend. This current study intends to explore the SGBs' role in the context of South African schools' experiences to establish some country-specific recommendations.

Serero (2016:174) recommends the two-tier approach to school governance, in which he proposes a structure consisting of the *Executive tier*, responsible for policy formulation and implementation. Serero (2016:175) maintains that the executive tier will assume a strategic accountability role, while the *Non-executive tier* will be responsible for scrutiny accountability. This approach could provide checks and balances that may in turn increase the effectiveness of roles performed by the SGBs.

In South Africa, Serero (2016:vi) conducted a study with the aim of investigating the effectiveness of the SGBs regarding their overall school governance mandate in the Free State Province. The current study aimed to investigate the role of SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. The two studies seem to have a similar scope and thrust, although they differ in structure in terms of the cases selected. Serero's (2016:146) study findings reveal that the effectiveness of the SGBs regarding their overall mandate is indeterminate and that the SGB perform well in some areas of governance and not too well in others. In particular, the study concludes that the structural composition of the SGBs limits the SGBs' effectiveness regarding their governance mandate. The study recommends the restructuring of the SGBs to enhance their effectiveness. This dissertation has its focus on the SGBs in South Africa, using the original case data from strategically selected public schools to connect the role of the SGBs' governance with school-level academic outcomes and effectiveness.

Issues of academic attainment and quality education are extensively explored in a study by Ford (2013:ii), which investigates the *Impact of SB Governance on Academic Achievement in Diverse States of the United States of America*. Most importantly, the study examines the connections between the SGB member backgrounds, adherence to a set of best practices created by the National School Boards Association, small group dynamics, and district graduation and drop-out rates. The study findings reveal that the way in which the SGBs govern affects district-level performance. The findings also highlight that the SGBs that engage in strategic planning, view their superintendent as a collaborator, they mitigate conflict, and perform better on academic outcome indicators. The roles of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness is dependent on the level of parental and stakeholder engagement in school governance.

Ford's (2013:137) dimension and thrust is critical for the current study. The effectiveness of schools is rated on the variables that include, but are not limited to, the provision of quality education, access to opportunities and parental level of involvement in school governance, respectively.

## **2.13 THE IMPORTANCE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

The role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness is dependent on the cooperation among various stakeholders. Thus, the stakeholders need to co-exist for a defined purpose. Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2019:18) defined stakeholders as all those who have a legitimate interest in the continuing effectiveness and success of an institution. Additionally, they highlighted that schools are at the hub of a network of overlapping, sometimes competing, interests from stakeholders such as politicians, business, and community groups. In justifying the inclusive participation of stakeholders, Ford (2013:67) notes that the democratisation of education includes the idea that stakeholders such as parents, teachers, learners, and other people (members of the neighbouring community) must participate in the activities of the school.

The Swedish National Agency of Education (SNAE, 2012:75) has acknowledged that discrepancies in quality between schools are growing, which, combined with transforming teaching methods, has contributed to the increasing variation in performance between schools. Thus, there is a need for effective school governance to ensure that schools work towards achieving their organisational goals with minimum discrepancies and variations. Thus, the role of the SGBs as regulatory structures becomes imperative. Effective schools are characterised by better school performance, a lower degree of behavioural problems, and less alcohol and drug use among their learners (Gottfredson, 2011:47). Similarly, Codrington (2012:106) advances that effective schools have placed an increasing emphasis on principals in terms of their capacity to articulate a vision for the school, and to create the shared meaning and common goals needed to reach this vision. Therefore, it is evident that effective school governance is strongly interlinked with leadership qualities of the principals. Effective school leadership is also considered a key constituent in achieving school improvement (Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016:333; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2014:36). In addition, Miller (2014:3) advances that effective leadership is

a vital component of a successful school. In turn, the SGBs are very important as they set conditions that are necessary for nurturing effective schools.

Effective schools operate under a more unified and consensual set of organisational goals, and create a social consensus about the school's mission, which is expected to benefit learner outcomes (Creemers & Reezigt, 2009:405). The SGBs have a positive role in promoting sustainable school management and administration. Saminathen et al. (2018:469) note that in Sweden, the transformations in management of the educational system have affected teachers' working conditions and responsibilities. Quality education is highly dependent on the teachers' motivation and feeling of security. Thus, among other issues, the SGBs may be responsible for supporting other related initiatives that have a positive effect on teachers' welfare. Simon and Johnson (2015:8) highlight that lack of staff cooperation undermines teacher consensus about school goals and values. They further argue that poor working conditions are linked with a high teacher turnover, which further undermines collaboration by the teachers. School ethos and school climate have been found to be positively linked with educational achievement (Weare & Farr, 2014:47).

On the other dimensions, SBGs have the autonomy to influence positive change and development at any given school. Power is typically devolved to school-level governing bodies, while operational management is the responsibility of the principal (Bush & Gamage, 2011:39). Bush and Heystek (2013:34) maintain that despite the significant difficulties facing the educational system in South Africa, governing bodies provide a good prospect of enhancing local democracy and improving the quality of education for all learners. The SGBs have a pivotal role in promoting teaching and learning processes. To improve on the current status of education and achieve quality education, it can be argued that there is a need that the SGBs also enhance their effectiveness and efficiency. Capacity-building is a major requirement for South African governing bodies (Graaff, 2014:34).

Reaching the goal of effective schools deserves efforts of a united force with positive attitude and a common understanding. Shober and Hartney (2014:24) maintain that the SGBs do not, and cannot, monitor and cajole teachers and principals (and even the superintendent) on a daily basis, but communities deserve the SGBs with the capacity to monitor them on a regular basis.

## **2.14 CHALLENGES FACED BY THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES**

The SGBs are constrained by various factors, among them their lack of a shared vision and conflict of interests. It seems very plausible that the possible cause of school governance challenges is located in the specialist nature of the prescribed functions themselves (Xaba, 2011:217). One major challenge lies in the inadequate capacity of the SGBs to govern, which arises as a result of different factors. Among other, such constraints are lacking training. Mabasa and Themane (2012:112) report that the SGBs are not trained before they start their work and this manifests in problems such as unfamiliarity with meeting procedures, problems with the specialist language used in meetings, difficulties in managing large volumes of paper, not knowing how to make a contribution, not knowing appropriate legislation, feeling intimidated by the presence of other members who seem knowledgeable, and perceiving their roles as simply endorsing what others have already decided upon.

When board members and superintendents are unclear about who is responsible for which duties, conflicts, and inefficiencies, then frustration is inevitable" (Goodman, Fullbright & Zimmerman, 2010:18). Thus, the school effectiveness is thereby negatively affected.

One of the constraints as pointed out by Shober and Hartney (2014:57) is that board members are generally unpaid and spend little time on district business. This may result in low motivation to participate wholeheartedly in school governance matters. However, it can be argued that when members spend limited time on district business, this could mean less opportunity to micromanage or engage in petty politics (Land, 2012:227; Shober & Hartney, 2014:56).

Kirst (2010:2) notes that at the turn of the previous century (1890–1910), schools in the USA were placed under stronger control of local education governments, the result of reforms that followed disclosures of widespread municipal corruption in schools as well as in city offices. Corruption is a big challenge within school governance issues, since the board members elected may turn to advance their own 'parochial and special' interests at the expense of the school as a whole. This may result in the school becoming ineffective as a result of losses incurred through corruption and mismanagement. The observation confirms findings by Transparency International



(2016:18), stating that the education sector is riddled with corruption, particularly on the corridors of power regarding the manner schools are being run by development associations and boards.

Education is in the midst of pivotal change, both nationally and globally. Learners are faced with many challenges, ranging from their own experiences of poverty, abuse and the poor quality of education, which in turn often result in grade repetition and high drop-out rates (Republic of Namibia, 2016:9). In this regard, the need for the SGBs to protect the learners through appropriate measures becomes critical. This can be achieved by insisting on and monitoring accountability through the involvement of the local community in school governance matters.

However, the frequent lack of parental and community participation or support in education has been identified as the missing link for ensuring high performance (Republic of Namibia, 2016:12).

A study conducted by Graaff (2014:14) on governance in the poorer public schools in South Africa states that parent governors report that staff and teachers are demotivated. In addition, the school principal seems tired and uninterested in their ideas for rejuvenation of the school. The author also reports that parent governors express frustration that their fundraising ideas are falling on deaf ears. Not knowing where else to turn to, they are no longer interested in standing for re-election.

Against this background, it can be argued that the SGBs, as well as parents and the communities are part of the problem where constraints are often caused by a lack of interest and lack of support; hence, these factors need to be addressed as there will be a negative impact on the school effectiveness. This study comes on the backdrop of devising strategies to ensure that the role of the SGBs is recognised in order to enhance effectiveness of schools. However, if the SGBs do not comprise some individuals with the necessary capacity, knowledge and passion, they may lack the bargaining power needed to influence the direction and magnitude of the schools' development. Sell (2016:78) claims that the SGBs play only a minor role in the hierarchy of government checks and balances. She advances that the SGBs can, however, adapt state reforms to local conditions and mobilise local support to rally for change in the school system. Being regulated 'from above' and only able to marginally

adapt the rules to local conditions may lead to reduced motivation to participate in the SGBs' business.

Most boards are increasingly becoming "rubber stamps", approving policy decisions and wishes of the superintendent or the city without argument or evaluation. They may also become "fire-fighters" who rush from problem to problem, fixing schools for the moment, but failing to address the cause of the problem or finding a long-term solution or cure for it (Graaff, 2014:12; Land, 2012:225; Sell, 2016:79). In any of these situations, school effectiveness is highly compromised.

In addition, the concept of the SGBs has received some backlash from critics who maintain that the SGBs have outlived their usefulness, and are often composed of inexperienced lay people meddling in a complex profession, and consequently, believing that the SGBs are too politically charged, with partisan demands getting in the way of providing quality education (Sell, 2016:84).

Similarly, the National School Boards Association (2016:6) observes that the current SGB system runs into five main obstacles: loss of power to other entities; poor superintendent relationships; lack of communication with the public and media; low voter and candidate turnout; and convincing critics that lay people belong to the board.

Brookover and Lezotte (1999:13) took the social structure and social climate of schools into account as intervening variables between the inputs and outputs of the school as a social system. The SGBs are constrained by a myriad of factors that range from political, economic and social structures. School boards are often reported on negatively in the media and, from time to time, their relevance – and even their continued existence – is questioned (Alsbury, 2018:205; Beckham and Wills, 2014:19; Land, 2012:230). In turn, the negative perceptions arising from the media have negatively affected on how society perceives the SGBs. In recent years, some observers have described the SGBs as anachronistic, dysfunctional and obsolete; and there have been calls for their replacement with a "more appropriate" governance mechanism (Hess, 2002:24; Owens, 2016:549).

In some cases, the SGBs' effectiveness is constrained because of the negative perceptions and attitudes. Xaba (2011:216) argues that the SGB members' roles are made difficult by how they gain membership to the SGB, that is, through a constituency

support base, which seems to suggest that they serve the interests of their constituencies, which makes it difficult to promote the best interests of the school in an independent and unbiased manner. Roos (2009:58) expresses the ideal governance situation thus:

Although governors are elected on a constituency basis, once they are elected, they are all equal governors of the school. Their responsibility is to govern the school within the framework provided and not to represent the sectoral interests of the group from which they are drawn.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of the SGBs, it has been proposed that specific strategies need to be adopted. One of the strategies for achieving this is the setting up of special sub-committees such as a school development and maintenance committee. A school health, feeding and safety committee; a school disciplinary committee; a school finance and human resource committee; a school sports, arts and culture committee; and a community outreach committee (United Nations Children's Education Fund [UNICEF], 2016:12) are some examples.

These committees are critical as they deal with the broader aspects of the day-to-day governance and activities of schools. Much research on the traditional SGBs is in fact sceptical of the capacity of such boards to positively influence academic performance (Ford, 2013:167). Xaba (2011:217) recommends the SGB member training aimed at capacity building should be based on situational factors pertaining to the capacity needs of schools themselves through adoption of a capacity assessment to avoid a "one-size-fits-all" approach to training and development.

Research indicates that the SGBs in South African schools are under-capacitated and not effective in engaging with the business of teaching and learning (RSA, 1997:175). Therefore, the need to capacitate the SGBs to ensure that they perform their roles effectively cannot be overstated. Harris (2010:2) articulates this thus,

People who have been elected into school development associations or school development committees seem to serve the purpose of the rich. It is the public's view that this is a deliberate ploy to have the rich spearheading the setting of levies at certain amounts as the trend is to choose those who are rich, the haves, while the have-nots are side-lined in these committees.

Various studies reveal the challenge arising from a lack of parental involvement in school governance matters. According to Ngubane (2015:67), these challenges are often based on or comprise “lack of commitment to the school, illiteracy among adults, and communication breakdown between the school and its parents”. While these facts are still prominent, the spirit of participative management seems to be ‘flowing gradually’ into public schools. The situation in some public schools is slowly improving, where it is based on a shared vision regarding the need to uphold the aspects of shared decision-making, which are key to the functions and roles of the SGBs. There had been a perspective that educational reforms should start in the urban areas and later spread to the rural areas; a perception that transformation should start from the former Model C schools, and then meander to the historically disadvantaged black schools.

Despite the introduction of new policies and laws in South Africa since 1994, the changes in the education system have unfortunately not brought about many of the desired effects. The failure to implement these legislated and regulated changes expressed in Acts and laws is often blamed on poor and inefficient leadership and management. The attempts by the National Department of Education to equip school managers who have a demonstrated the need for capacity-building in areas relating to school governance, management and administration, did not seem to have reached as many managers as anticipated. Often, such managers and teachers also do not want to spend the extra (unpaid) time on further training after hours. Therefore, and despite the democratic processes and the new laws/Acts, many of the South African schools are still attempting to address the ‘shambolic education legacy’ of the country (Naidu et al., 2018:2).

According to McLennan and Thurlow (2013:16), there are still a number of challenges that make it difficult to benefit fully from the achievement of complete freedom. Among others, the challenges include disparities in socio-economic conditions, unavailability of resources in rural schools, a lot of educational policies needing to be implemented at the school level, and the problems that hinder the implementation process. The disparities will continue to exist as long as the number of schools that try to become self-managing with respect to new policies and laws is on the rise (McLennan & Thurlow, 2013:16). Naidu et al. (2018:2) state that there is pressure on schools to

deliver, despite the adverse lingering effects of the previous apartheid era in some historically disadvantaged, and underfunded or even dysfunctional schools. In the new democratic dispensation, schools are no longer segregated by race, but some schools may well lag behind other schools, where the SGBs have not yet capitalised on the opportunities open to their schools, so that better results will be produced.

## **2.15 EMERGING ISSUES /CONCLUSIONS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

The review of related literature reveals that the SGBs are essential in the running of public schools in South Africa. Thus, their roles need to be complemented and augmented by concerted efforts from the various stakeholders. However, there are many challenges that are associated with the SGBs across schools. The literature review suggests the need for adoption of strategies for improvement of the SGBs' performance and thus the schools' performance. Chief among the necessary strategies to be implemented is the training of the SGB members to build their capacity. The literature provides evidence to suggest that capacity-building initiatives will benefit the SGBs as they develop more efficient working relationships among the stakeholders involved in the school management. However, the literature review also reveals that besides the lack of training or capacity-building initiatives, where there is a conflict of interests, corruption, biased participation, or the influence of ulterior motives/political or separate agendas among the SGB members, the roles of the SGBs are negatively affected, which in turn has a negative ripple effect on the academic achievement of learners, a negative effect on the school's ability to function properly and provide the necessary infrastructure for an optimal learning environment and thus, overall, the effectiveness of such schools is compromised.

The literature provided sufficient evidence through other empirical studies conducted across the globe that the SGBs and BOM members have to be trained to enhance their competencies in managing schools. However, it was noted particularly in South Africa that there was no specialised training received by the stakeholders regarding their governance role within the SGBs.

## **2.16 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter reviewed literature linked to the problem under study. The history of the problem was discussed with particular focus on the overview and perspectives of the

problem under investigation. The chapter also provided a historical account of the SGBs in the South African context with reference to the pre- and post-1994 education systems in South Africa. It revealed that various jurisdictions have their own ways of defining the SGBs. Thus, the review explored the different definitions and roles of SGBs. It was shown that in South Africa, school boards are perceived as the SGBs. The review explored in detail the manifestations and dynamics of school governance in South Africa. It was shown that the legal framework in South Africa has provided for the establishment of the SGBs as provided for by the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. The chapter also highlighted the various constraints affecting the defined scope of the SGBs in different nations. The historical background of the SGBs across jurisdictions point to the fact that the SGBs are increasingly becoming 'universal' structures in schools across the globe.

The chapter also defined school governing bodies from various perspectives to give an informed and broader view of the concept. Topical in the definitions was the fact that the SGBs are a creation of statutes in any given nation, and that they are confronted with varied challenges and experiences. The roles and functions of the SGBs were also discussed in the review. Chief among the roles was the need to achieve quality education in schools. The review also focused on the SGBs' membership and the requirements for becoming a member of the SGB. It was established from the literature that fundamentally, the composition of the SGBs was supposed to take into account the expertise and skills offered by the various representatives drawn from relevant stakeholders within a given school locality. The overall theme emerging from the empirical, academic and scholarly study findings on the SGBs stressed the importance of capable stakeholders in school governance. The review suggested that the SGBs' legal framework in South Africa needs to be strengthened in order to deal with the challenges facing the SGBs. The evaluation of the SGBs' legislative and policy framework in South Africa acknowledged the critical role played by policy-makers in ensuring that school governance ideals are implemented. Based on the reviewed literature, it can be argued that citizens hold varied perceptions regarding the strategies for enhancing school effectiveness, although there was consensus that the SGBs, together with a strong and efficient leadership, are the ultimate solution to all initiatives meant to strengthen school governance and performance.

The literature review suggests that the SGBs are important structures/establishments. However, the challenges faced by the SGBs were also highlighted. Underfunding of schools, particularly in rural and poor areas, historically disadvantaged schools or part of informal settlements, seems to hinder the functioning of these schools. Added to this scenario, was the lack of parent and community involvement, interest and support, but also the lack of capacity in the actual SGBs. In addition, it was shown that there is great need to seek ways of collectively addressing these constraints to increase these schools' effectiveness. While there are the necessary institutional and legal frameworks that govern operations of the SGBs, some of the Acts and policies are not aligned, and are not implemented in all schools. The next chapter shall describe the models and theoretical framework that inform the study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **APPROACHES, MODELS AND TRENDS IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter outlined the challenges arising from inequalities, disparities and dysfunctionality experienced by the SGBs in historically disadvantaged black schools in South Africa. The previous chapter presented a comprehensive review of the literature on school governance, while highlighting the roles of SGBs across jurisdictions. The chapter further looked into approaches, frameworks, models, trends and capacities of the SGBs internationally and explored some best practices and challenges in this regard.

This chapter gives an overview and a detailed analysis of selected countries, particularly focusing on the experiences of the SGBs in supporting the schools' efforts to improve learner performance. In this regard, the literature makes reference to countries such as Australia, Germany, India, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. An analysis of the work of the school boards in these countries is meant to shed light on how they operate, so that it will enable a comparison with how the SGBs in South African schools work. The chapter examines the similarities and differences regarding the roles of the SGBs in equipping and governing the schools.

There is a positive correlation between the SGBs that are not assertive in their roles and poor learner performance in the tests and national examinations. According to Holman (2013:2), success in schools relies on excellent school governance and accountability. Therefore, schools that lack solid and well-informed SGBs would struggle to achieve good academic results and improve the learners' achievements. The effectiveness of the SGBs does not only inspire schools to improve learner achievement, but it also helps to build a good character in learners. Every parent wants their child to leave school with not only impressive qualifications and strong scholastic competencies to increase their academic opportunities at tertiary level, but also to become well-rounded individuals with good values. In this respect, Holman (2013:2) argues, "the test results should be the beginning, not the end of the story." Thus, the role of the SGBs becomes critical since it gives schools an opportunity to utilise the



autonomy granted by the DBE to consider how to maximise learners' academic success.

Williamson and Field (as cited in Holman, 2013:2) posit that the governing bodies can play a critical role in ensuring that the school provides a rich all-round experience as well as acceptable test results. Although the SGBs can make decisions regarding school governance and improvement, they still need to provide strong leadership to make that goal a reality. When the SGBs are led by a competent leadership, they tend to encourage the school principal and staff to raise their levels of commitment and accountability. Consequently, the school would strive to enrich the academic experience through effective teaching and learning, provide adequate funds for such learning to capacitated, and ensure a safe school environment. If guidance and implementation for these functions take place in an efficient manner, then this will foster learners' confidence (Holman, 2013:3) and raise their motivation to work harder in their studies.

### **3.2 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE MODELS**

The promulgation of the SASA, through legislation, brought about devolution of powers of school authorities to include parents and learners. Although parents were finally given the powers to be actively involved in the decision-making that affects their children's education, the consistent and full implementation of the Act is yet to happen in all schools. In support of this statement, Maraj (2010:2) concedes that "A legally supported opportunity has been made available for the millions of historically disadvantaged parents to play a constructive and meaningful role in their children's education through the formation of democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs) in South Africa."

Currently, not all the SGBs in South Africa seem to have a clear understanding of their roles and what the other stakeholders in education expect of them. Perhaps, if these roles were clearly understood, the quality of education in schools would be better. Further, as Ehren et al. (2015:3) highlight in their study, the characteristics of effective the SGBs in governing and improving the educational quality of their schools should be described. The formation of task teams and committees could assist to create a platform where the SGBs discuss not only the current scenarios, but also future, long-

term governance alternatives. This was done in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2010, when the New Orleans Task Force “considered how to sustain the academic progress that has occurred since 2005 within a coherent, enduring system that restores local control of public education” (Ehren et al., 2015:3).

### **3.2.1 Key Universal Governance Models**

This study was informed by two pivotal and universal models; namely, the Quality Education model (QEM) and the School Development Accountability (SDA) model/framework. The rationale for selecting these models was that they are relevant in supporting the topic under investigation. This study investigated the role of the SGBs on enhancing the effectiveness of South African schools. The rationale for setting up the SGBs was to improve the efficiency of schools in working towards the attainment of quality teaching and education (Land, 2012:226).

#### **3.2.1.1 The quality education model**

This study was premised on the assumptions of the Quality Education model (QEM). The rationale for selecting the model was based on the view that the SGBs have some roles that aim to promote quality educational standards. The QEM was developed in 1999 by the Legislative Council on the Quality Education Commission, Oregon QEM to evaluate best educational practices (Quality Education Commission, Oregon, 2018:8). Quality provision of the best educational standards is at the core of SBs across various jurisdictions (Deacon, 2015).

According to Quality Education Commission, Oregon (2018:7), the QEM continues to evolve with the aim to remain a useful guide to education policy. This study investigated the role played by the SGBs in enhancing effectiveness of South African schools. Therefore, issues of quality educational teaching and learning standards are critical. To this end, the quality educational model becomes justifiable in informing the discussions and literature review. The QEM will be most effective, if it serves as a resource that promotes an informed and robust dialogue among teachers, communities, and policy-makers (Quality Education Commission, Oregon, 2018:7). The assumption of the model is relevant in that it promotes the interplay of teachers and the community. A curriculum is essentially a selection from the culture

(Stenhouse, 2010:138; Lawton, 2009:123). Thus, it is imperative to use a model that recognises the place and utility role of the SGBs.

Across jurisdictions, the SGBs' major role has been to regulate standards in the day-to-day running of schools with a view to promote and enhance the quality of education (Moorosi & Bantwini, 2016:3; Serero, 2016:v). In support of the drive to achieve quality education through decentralising school governance to the SGBs, Quality Education Commission, Oregon (2018:8) notes that because circumstances and needs differ across schools, districts should make sure the locus of decision-making is at the proper level, where decisions about matters that are truly district-wide can be made centrally, but decisions about matters that depend on a school-specific context and conditions should be made by individual school leaders. The QEM relates well to the issue of establishing the SGBs as supported by the key tenets of the model.

### 3.2.1.2 School Development Accountability (SDA) model

In order to complement the QEM, the study makes reference to the School Development Accountability model. This model emerged against the background that one of the core functions of the SGBs is to promote accountability within the schools regarding the manner in which the infrastructure and finances are handled (Kayumbu, 2017:84). A school development and accountability (SDA) framework provides schools with useful feedback that guides and supports them to make continuous improvements, making sure that quality education will be provided (Wohlstetter, 1995:24).

An analysis of the role of the SGBs involves dealing with aspects related to developments and efforts to ensure that schools offer the best teaching and learning services. Wohlstetter (1995:24) notes that 'As a *quid pro quo* to additional autonomy, greater transparency and accountability are needed to allow members of the public to monitor the performance and proper use of resources of the schools.' The SDA framework conforms to the broader key functions of the SGBs as provided for by the South African Schools Act (1996), which places more emphasis on strengthening and increasing accountability levels.

A study conducted by Nyaude (2018:vi) on strategies for combating corruption in four public secondary schools in Zimbabwe concluded that transparency and

accountability are two important virtues that must be upheld, if schools are to improve on offering quality education. The study notes that corruption is one of the major obstacles to the provision of quality education. It follows that the assumptions of the School Development and Accountability framework or model becomes a necessity when dealing with the role of the SGBs on enhancing school effectiveness.

It is argued that through the SDA framework, principals and all the SGB members will have an opportunity to collectively explore the overall picture of the planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and reviewing procedures at school level. School self-evaluation (SSE) is an essential part of the quality assurance mechanism of school education in Hong Kong (Land, 2012:232). Thus, there is a need to develop an assessment framework that assists the SGBs in making compressive evaluations regarding the schools' operations; for example, evaluating the mission, visions and strategic intents of any given school. By allowing the involvement of different stakeholders (including teachers, parents and learners) in the SSE process, the transparency of school management and operation is increased, and the commitment of stakeholders to school development is enhanced (Tsotetsi et al., 2008:386). The issues of development and accountability are also supported by policy and legislative pronouncements and promulgations. As such, this study observed that related to the SDA framework is what is referred to as the 'Punctuated Equilibrium model (PEM)'. In addition, Jones (2012:12) maintains that policy change is incremental (punctuated equilibrium), characterised by long periods of stability and interrupted by changes to the system. Stability is maintained by policy monopolies and supported by policy ideas linked to core values. In this regard, it follows that the role of the SGBs can be directly and indirectly affected by policy changes, thus it would follow that issues of quality attainment and retention should be at the core of the roles and functions of the SGBs.

### **3.3 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE MODELS IN THE NETHERLANDS**

To achieve effective and quality public education, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) (2013) in the Netherlands recognises three models of school governance; namely, the parents' cooperative model, the Carver model, and the corporate model.

### **3.3.1 The Parents' Cooperative Model**

The parents' cooperative model is used largely by Montessori and Jewish schools, and leans mostly on parents' opinions. Parents in this model can elect the SB and approve the budget. The NAIS is not in favour of this model, based on its non-reliability and sustainability, since it is by and large based on parents' views, and they presume that it "is inclined on too many occasions towards a crisis posture that undermines school leadership and board governance". The parents' cooperative model has the same inherent approach as the Waldorf approach. Their basis is focusing on the present *status quo* of the institution, and is not much concerned about the future of the organisation. However, this model still works well in some institutions despite being a short-term paradox. The parents' cooperative model provides the parents with some form of local ownership of the schools through their involvement and subsequent participation.

### **3.3.2 The Carver Model**

The NAIS regards the Carver approach as an "authoritative sorting mechanism" and highly prescriptive, as it can give a clear distinction between the SGB and the school management team roles. This model is better defined as the one that sees the boards "trying to free themselves from the limitations and foibles of the constituent-driven model" (NAIS (2013:17). However, the Carver model has received some criticisms because of its failure to cater for the financial side, and not involving the board in doing fundraising. The NAIS still maintains the Carver model is viable. The model deals with the separation of powers and delineation of duties. Thus, this provides an opportunity for specific role allocation and performance, which in turn, promotes the effectiveness of the SGBs in general.

### **3.3.3 The Corporate Model**

The NAIS has a high regard and advocates for the corporate model, since this approach designs a strategic plan that has the end in mind, the future of the institution. The corporate model allows the school governors to take a closer look at the institutional stability and growth over time. The NAIS (2013:19) avers that the "corporate board model operates from a 'shareholder and stakeholder' perspective, making decisions that are in the best interest of all the constituents (parents, faculty,

staff, alumni, prospective parents and future generations of learners).” In the corporate model, the board chooses its members and its successors, considering the future needs of the institution. It follows that this model aims at enhancing the key principles of inclusivity. Thus, the collective participation by all stakeholders and shareholders provides a platform for exchanging views and ideas that help the SGBs in their endeavours to promote the effectiveness of South African schools.

### **3.3.4 The Model that Works Best**

According to Ehren et al. (2015:4), the purpose of good governance in schools is to ultimately lead to good education in which all learners can learn and ultimately achieve their academic potential. In the Netherlands, as described by Ehren et al (2015:4), the quality of schools is improved by SBs working hand-in-hand with school inspectors by monitoring and evaluating data on learner achievement and school documents. The high-risk schools are identified during the early warning analysis. Ehren et al. (2015:5) add that the schools that are constantly failing and are highly under-developed and low-performing in the Netherlands normally receive additional interventions, and the SBs have to produce an improvement and implementation plan to combat future failure by the school. In the case of a lack of improvement in the high-risk schools, school inspections, letters of warning, reduction of funding and school closure follow eventually.

The Dutch Inspectorate of Education does not have any specific evaluations of their school boards; however, they have an expectation that “the working methods would make SBs more effective in monitoring and improving the quality of their schools” (Ehren et al., 2015:6). Research studies reveal that SBs govern their school systems differently, but they seem to have one ultimate goal – good and sustainable quality education. With this understanding, Jeff Moredock, the NAIS governance counsel, concludes that “no model will work any better than its users understand how it should work, and, by extension, how well the constituent community understands what the proper roles and responsibilities of a board are” (NAIS, 2013:18).

## **3.4 INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

This section presents some examples of best practices of the SGBs’ roles in selected countries: Australia, Germany, India, New Zealand, the UK and the USA.

The effectiveness of the SGBs is dependent on the role of other stakeholders working together with the intent of achieving the set institutional goals and targets. Ideally, the stakeholders should collaborate on a continuum of shared interests. The Functionalist theory is of the view that society has some coordinated structures, which work interdependently, based on value consensus, and essential similarities in order to achieve common goals (Haralambos & Holborn, 2012:21; Anderson & Taylor, 2010:12).

It follows that if there are harmonious relations between stakeholders and the SGBs, the effective running of schools can be more easily facilitated; while the ineffectiveness of school governors and the stakeholders may have a negative ripple effect on the sustainable academic achievement by learners. It remains the duty of school governors to ensure that the building blocks of effective and efficient governance are put in place, including instituting higher-level strategic planning, accountability, transparency, and a robust approach to improve learner achievement.

It is generally assumed that for a school to perform well academically, its governors should have a strong interest in curriculum matters. It should be on the same foundation that the school governors endeavour to develop the good processes and systems that can operate effectively; for example, the coordination of school activities. In simple terms, the decision-making of the SGBs should always be motivated by the objective to make a positive difference in the lives of the learners. Moreover, it would be appropriate to keep evaluating if the practices that were followed worked or needed to be reviewed to check if they were best practices at all.

Maile (2012:329) emphasises the importance of accountability of the SGBs for school development. He states that every stakeholder or member of the SGB must be prepared to play their part actively. Logically, if the SGBs were truly accountable to their respective stakeholders, their efficiency would improve. Maile (2012:329) cautions that this ideal may be hindered if illiterate members are part of the SGBs, especially in the rural areas. His contention is that illiteracy precludes parents from accessing the relevant management information from the principal and limits their understanding of legislation that needs to be implemented and adhered to.

The listed countries that follow will be examined to shed some light on how they practise governance in their schools. The countries' experiences will be used to benchmark the South African context. It can be argued that learning and contextualisation of the best practices constitute a long-term process that needs to be sustained by all stakeholders. This has positive implications for the realisation of school performance in general.

The selected countries were chosen because they are generally perceived to have better functioning school governance systems and rank very high in learner achievement as compared to other countries in the world. The section focuses mainly on how the SGB reforms positively affected their respective districts and schools. Furthermore, the section examines the challenges experienced when executing school governance functions.

### **3.4.1 The Australian Case**

This section presents the school governing experiences in Australia. It provides an elaboration of how the schools are governed. Furthermore, an analysis of the effectiveness of the systems and procedures is done. Therefore, the way the SGBs operate and how effective they are in Australian public schools is examined in this section. The presentation also briefly highlights the constraints faced (if any) to provide a detailed projection of the entire SGBs in Australia.

#### **3.4.1.1 The general perception of school governance**

School governance is one of the voluntary experiences where the parents and other stakeholders participate willingly, thereby giving back to their communities. Cassells (2011:32.) stresses the importance of education and sufficient financial resources to equip children and young people with the skills they need to succeed in life. He further advances the significance of education in opening doors and enhancing social mobility. The overarching goals of the Australian government are tailor-made to achieve an 'education revolution'. Furthermore, the education system targets the social inclusion agenda and reflects the importance of increased participation in education and training.



Different countries perceive the current *status quo* of the school governance differently. While some rate their SGBs moderately, others feel little has been done to achieve reforms that could foster change and make a difference to their school communities (Government of Australia, 2017:8). It is generally believed that school administrators who were trained on outdated and traditional practices can do more harm than good in schools, as they unconsciously or consciously resist change.

#### 3.4.1.2 Unequal access to educational resources and information

The differences experienced in available opportunities and resources are common and vary from country to country. Moreover, it is common to connect the education performance of learners to their socio-economic status. That implies that socio-economic inequalities have a great impact on learner achievement. The SGBs play a pivotal role in striking some balance and harmony in schools to make sure that there is equal access to educational resources. Research studies confirm the educational inequalities often linked to weak education system lead to the decline or underperformance of a country's economy. Although the Australian education system is largely subsidised, the disadvantaged sections of the population, namely the indigenous Aboriginal Australians, still lag in terms of access to education. Argy (2017:14) asserts that “the differences in academic performance between the highest and lowest performing learners (and even between the lowest and the median) are large in Australia, and more dependent on the influence of class, family and social background than in many other countries such as Canada, Ireland, Austria, Korea, Finland, and other Scandinavian countries.” One other factor to consider is that the Australian education system is relatively dependent on private financing and that makes it difficult for the less privileged to be on a par with the economically advantaged learners.

Argy (2017:23) further notes, “Inequalities will always persist, but governments have an obligation to spread education opportunity as widely as possible – from kindergarten through to secondary school, university and adult vocation training.” It should be the aim of the Australian Department of Education and Training to remove impediments to education achievement stemming from segregation based on class, poverty, poor nutrition, ill health, ignorance, social distance and poor or zero child care, or the conditions in schools.

#### 3.4.1.3 Social and ethnic barriers to school governance

The Australian Department of Education (2017:12) acknowledges the existence of barriers to education and school governance such as poverty, drop-out, attendance and unequal opportunities. Against this background, Australia works with different governments to improve access and learning outcomes through an education policy, strategic and operational planning and budgeting, and through personnel capacity building at the schools, and on sub-national and national levels. This strategy requires new ways of working – building knowledge, strengthening education information systems and assessing results so that interventions are effectively targeted. There is a great need to identify successful approaches in the education sector in an effort to consolidate a better practice across the school governance discourse. There is also the need for increasing collaborations to enhance the effectiveness of the SGBs in Australia.

In various countries, school governance is still faced with insurmountable challenges. While inequality and class continue to take a lead as barriers to change, school governance is constrained by misunderstanding and contestations regarding guiding policies. It is argued that school governors need to be supported by relevant effective policies in order to be functional and equipped to perform their roles effectively.

#### **3.4.2 The Germany Case**

The SGBs play a very significant role in Germany. In this section, the experiences of the SGBs in Germany are going to be highlighted. The presentation will try to make a comparison with the South African context.

##### 3.4.2.1 Unequal distribution of resources

Research findings reveal that social inequalities still exist in German schools, where the pre-schools and primary schools fail to compensate for disadvantaged backgrounds. According to Solga (2015:141), the restricted learning time of German “half-day schools”, where teaching normally ends at noon, warrants parental assistance for the rest of the day. Additionally, the unequal distribution of educational resources among the parents is equally critical in communities. In a way, the SGBs

would focus on the equitable distribution of resources to protect the children from financially disadvantaged communities.

In almost all countries, states, districts and schools, there are vast differences with respect to purpose, vision and values. There are schools whose leadership effectiveness is tremendously thwarted by lack of direction and knowledge. Such schools must come up with a common set of beliefs that would guide the practices of all concerned in that school. Sometimes, when some schools keep gauging themselves against schools that are constantly excelling, this becomes a motivation for competition towards achievement of desired targets. Fiore (2014:34) defines school administrators as “educational leaders who promote the success of all learners by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.” The link between the school leaders and community is critical and should be facilitated smoothly by the SGBs. While it is a wish and goal of all school managers and governors, districts and national offices to improve learner learning, the policy development and implementation should also consider the other factors such as the political and economic environment that normally affect their respective schools.

Fiore (2014:243) asserts that motivational theories guide the school governors in understanding what needs to be implemented in their schools to improve learner academic performance and under what conditions they can improve learner and employee morale and motivation.

Helmke, Franz and Weinert (2016:13) highlight variables such as “learners' cognitive and affective entry characteristics, observed efficiency of management and quality of instruction, the learner perceptions of these, learners' observed time-on-task and self-reported attention, and affective and cognitive outcomes” as playing a significant role in boosting learners' performance, thereby enhancing the general school effectiveness. According to Helmke et al. (ibid), factors such as efficient classroom management, intensive use of quality time and strong task orientation have positive correlations with learner engagement and cognitive outcomes.

### 3.4.2.2 Racial equity and redress

Racial equality in educational resources and opportunities is still a challenge to many nations and countries. Thus, there is great need for education officials and the SGBs to provide mechanisms and strategies to embrace educational reforms that can promote racial equity in schools. McArdle et al. (2017:12) define racial equity in education as the assignment of learners to public schools without regard to their race. Additionally, this may entail the direct treatment of learners and availing of opportunities without any racial discrimination. This may include providing learners with full opportunities for participation in all educational programmes regardless of their race.

### 3.4.3 The India Case

This section deals with the experiences of the SGBs in respect of India. One of the purposes of school governors in schools is holding teachers and the school management team to account for teaching and learning activities in the school. This is true even though the policy-makers tend to exclude the SGBs in the school improvement designs and plans. In India, the adoption of the Right of the Child to Free and Compulsory Education Fund is regarded as proof of the commitment of the Indian government to free education for all (Government of India, 2015:6). Thus, this fund is supported by the promulgation of an Education Act, enforceable by arms of the Indian Government. This is advantageous in that it consolidates the powers of the SGBs.

One of the strong measures of this Act is the establishment of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) (Government of India, 2015:8). PTA is normally constituted of parents and teachers of a particular school with a mandate to improve school effectiveness and maintain excellence. Generally, PTAs in several countries are elected to serve in the association or council for three years, taking into account their responsible leadership and ability to make a difference in their communities. According to Wonde (2012:11), the formation of PTAs was based on the goal to provide a conducive environment for the community and as well as engaging parents to be more active in educational activities. According to the USAID (2018:21), PTAs are organised at the micro-level such as a school, to further strengthen the relations between parents and teachers. In the PTA setup, parents are able to participate actively in the teaching

process, and they take joint decisions when they seek remedial interventions to challenges at hand. It can be argued that the downside of the PTA, as the name reveals, is that it excludes learners' involvement and representation, unlike the parent-teacher-learner associations that were once in operation in the South African education system.

Another important measure in the Act pertains to the creation of a School Management Committee in each Indian village (Kumar, 2015:2). It is an indisputable fact that when the community is involved in and supports the school programmes, new and recurring problems are solved much faster and more easily (Johnson et al., 2018:85).

Without the interventions by all relevant stakeholders, it will be difficult for the DoEs alone to solve problems that affect schools. Therefore, the various organisations beyond the government may be engaged to address any potential crises for the effective management of schools.

The ongoing issues that generally affect learner outcomes include absenteeism of teachers and learners, lack of quality teaching and learning, lack of teaching resources, lack of access to technology, ill-discipline of learners, unavailability of a good educational school culture and climate, and lack of cooperation between school management teams (SMTs) and the SGBs (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018:5).

Dixon and Tooley (2015:29), in their study of low-income schools in Hyderabad, India, discover that two regulatory regimes exist, one that is set out 'on paper' in the education acts and associated rules, and another that operates 'in practice'. A few of the factors influencing successful school governance pertaining to India are detailed below.

#### 3.4.3.1 Authority and responsibility of SGBs in India

According to Dixon and Tooley (2015:29), there are three different school management types in India – government, private aided ("Grant-in-Aid" schools), and private unaided schools. In India, private aided schools are run by private management (religious institutions), but they have teaching staff funded 100% by the government and follow grant-in-aid codes (Dixon & Tooley, 2015:30).

According to Dewey (2012:219), education has played a great role in society, which includes informing and transforming the minds and developing individual capabilities and characters. Therefore, based on the Dewey's approach, it can be concluded that education is an avenue for social transformation in society.

The British Council in India (2014:18) posits that the key responsibility of the SGB is to assist the schools to achieve their aims still exist and are achieved. In addition, the other roles and responsibilities of the SGBs include upholding educational standards, strengthening financial management, arranging for and outsourcing educational resources, and the ongoing initiative of hiring qualified teachers.

Other studies reveal that the SGB in schools such as Chigwell School in India, is responsible for ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, including the annual review of safeguarding and child protection arrangements. However, generally, there is still a gap between the SGBs' knowledge of their responsibilities and the actual implementation.

In South Africa, various studies suggest that if the focus on improving governing bodies would involve capacity-building, the SGBs would play their roles well (Mncube, 2018:3). To support the significance empowering the SGBs to be effective and knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities, Bagarette (2012:105) suggests that both the SGBs and principals as centres of power in the school setting should acquire all the necessary skills and knowledge of the SASA to better understand their own functions. According to Bagarette (ibid.), the two centres of power should partner with the DBE to build their capacity and avoid conflicts, as they are supposed to promote the best interests of the learners and the school at large. In attempting to address the issue at hand where the SGBs continue to encounter challenges in executing their functions at the respective schools, Xaba (2011:211) relates this to the lack of specialised knowledge and skills to perform duties as stipulated by the SASA No. 84 of 1996. The challenge of the SGBs' capacity to govern makes one question whether there is any training offered to the SGB members and even the quality of training provided to them by the provincial departments through their functional units. Mabasa and Themane (2012:112) argue that the SGBs' 'training-on-the-job' continues to present further predicaments in school governance, as the school governors, even though they are available and maybe keen to do the work, they may be constrained

by lack of support from the relevant stakeholders. This, however, assumes that the members are willing to take part in such training, without being paid for their time attending the sessions. According to Mabasa and Themane (2012: 113), if the SGBs would only start executing their work after they had been trained first, perhaps challenges of unfamiliarity with meeting procedures, problems with the specialist language used in meetings, difficulties in managing large volumes of paper, not knowing how to make a contribution, not knowing appropriate legislation, feeling intimidated by the presence of other members who seem knowledgeable and perceiving their roles as simply endorsing what others have already decided upon, would no longer be an issue. However, this will obviously not overcome the potential of dominant members controlling the proceedings. The inadequacy of training of the SGB members does not only impede on the core functions of school governance, but also leads to the SGBs failing to enhance the effectiveness of the schools. Studies reveal the disappointing fact that those SGBs who went for training came back poorly trained and equipped for their SGB service, having acquired little or no knowledge of the nature of school management or governance functions (Xaba, 2011:217).

According to Xaba (2011:218), most SGB members are not academically or financially skilled to fully comprehend most functions as stipulated by the Schools Act that requires highly skilled members with specialised knowledge in areas such as, *inter alia*, financial accounting, facilities maintenance, and policy development and formulation. Therefore, analysis, interpretation and processing of technical terms and language still pose a challenge, even when capacity building and training are offered to the SGB members. There is wisdom in the proverb “head knowledge and heart knowledge both talk about knowledge but operate on different spheres”. In this case, it means that the assumption that every elected member of the SGB is capable and knowledgeable enough to take on their role without further training is a myth. With regard to the actual requirements for the SGBs, one needs to know and understand some theory and be able to effectively link it to practice.

In support, Susie Alier, Chair of the Governing Body in Chigwell School, argues that “in order to exercise this role effectively, the Governing Body invests considerable time and expertise to acquire an informed perspective into the working of the school,

providing the management team with support, challenge and the stimulus for growth and development” (Governors of Chigwell School, 2016:2).

#### 3.4.3.2 Strategies to manage educational resources and programmes

Tsotetsi (2015:iv) asserts that the State cannot control schools; it must share its power with other stakeholders involved in education. The devolution of power can be successful when the school governors’ head knowledge and heart knowledge on two different levels of understanding receive the relevant training to understand the extent of power vested in them. When the SGBs are empowered and capacitated with knowledge and skills, they can make meaningful decisions on matters affecting their respective schools and communities.

Therefore, it is imperative for the SGBs to undergo the appropriate training to better prepare them for their governance duties. It is equally important to adopt a collaborative effort where all the stakeholders who have the enormous task of improving the quality of education in schools get involved. For this reason, Sayed and Carrim (2017:91) contend that the greater representation of different stakeholders on the committee or democratic structure ensures educational accountability, legitimacy and democracy. Collaborative strengthening of the existing strategies remains an imperative in order to capacitate the SGBs in their day-to-day running of schools.

#### 3.4.4 The New Zealand Case

This section presents the SGBs’ experiences in respect of New Zealand. Various studies have revealed that the basic role of school governors is to raise learner achievement (Quan-Baffour, 2006:24). Compared to South Africa, the aspect of development of learner academic achievement is also cited as the main goal of the SGBs. Therefore, all the efforts by the SGBs should directly or indirectly address the academic performance of their schools. Additionally, there are factors that should be considered to enhance the effectiveness of the SGBs. These may include developing and strengthening strategic planning to promote networking opportunities within the confines of governing of policies and legislation. Although schools differ in terms of culture, character and community location, they still share a similar interest in the success of an individual school. In addition, it is a purpose of all schools to have effective, efficient and functional the SGBs to ensure that they achieve educational



success, which, in turn, assists to step up the performance of the education system at large.

According to Thody and Punter (2010:185), New Zealand's Board of Trustees introduced the school accountability card. This innovation is different and is parallel to what is currently part of England and Wales's governing bodies.

To strike a balance between the governors' school improvement drive and desirable outcomes, the SGBs should first have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and endeavour to work in partnership with the SGBs of other schools, districts and regions (Quan-Baffour, 2006:40). Additionally, a great partnership should be founded on honest and open dialogues, bearing in mind that recognising the common purpose of the SGBs would make them achieve the best possible outcomes. A clear strategy provides an opportunity for the SGBs to conduct some periodic checks and balances of the entire school system. Such checks and balances are meant to strengthen the schools' internal control measures; and hence, provide an improvement on transparency and accountability.

### **3.4.5 The United Kingdom Case**

This section highlights in detail the experiences in the UK regarding the operations of the SGBs. The UK had been part of the European Union, is still conserved a part of Europe, despite it having left the European Union, and consists of islands. The UK has been selected as an example of best practice.

Similar to South Africa, one of the noted reforms in the UK was the devolution of powers and delegation of responsibilities to schools. The purpose of decentralisation of powers to schools was intended to increase a sense of accountability and put some pressure on the SGBs and school principals (Farrell & Law, 2009:4). In the UK, the role of the school governor is a demanding experience, and it is a good way to give back to the local community. Ngidi (2014:260) posits that the SGBs took over all the administrative responsibilities of schools from the local education authorities who oversaw them before. The rationale behind the shift in management by the school boards in the UK was based on the assumption and confidence that the SGBs would handle school needs better than the local education authorities (Farrell & Law, 2009:5).

The SGBs are responsible for working with the schools to ensure that they deliver a good quality education. Together with the head teacher, who is responsible for the day-to-day management, the SGBs set the aims and policies of the schools.

Research studies indicate that in May 2014, the Department for Education (DfE) issued new statutory guidance on the Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools. As per the new statutory guidance (Paragraph 23), with effect from 1 September 2015, all governing bodies of maintained schools must be constituted under the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 or the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012, as appropriate. Paragraph 8 of the DfE guidance, linked to Section 1 of this article, says that a governing body should re-evaluate its Constitution, if things are not going well.

Regular re-evaluation becomes key, because it provides an opportunity for making informed internal and external governance introspections, considering the SGBs' effectiveness.

The section further adds that a governing body should also consider 'reconstitution' as a proactive move. The process of 'reconstitution' provides opportunities to rotate members of the SGBs and bring on board other members with new ideas that can transform schools.

Paragraph 23 of the guidance also says that governing bodies currently constituted under the 2007 Constitution or Federation Regulations may reconstitute on any date up to 1 September 2015 and should consider "the most effective and suitable date" for doing so. On the other hand, Paragraph 24 says that governing bodies should use the process as a chance to take stock of whether their size, structure and membership are fit for purpose to deliver their core functions and other duties. According to Lekalakala (2016:83), the SGBs are still in a fledgling state when it comes to their efficiency with regard to financial and curriculum matters. Thus, there is a great need for increased training to enhance the members' effectiveness to achieve maximum benefits from the SGBs.

The UK has set standards that regulate the profile for those members who chair the SGBs, as they are considered to have more senior roles and responsibilities (James, 2013:17). According to Farrell and Law (2009:5), the school governing bodies that

have been in existence in England and Wales since the early 1980s took over the responsibilities for overall administration of schools from local education authorities. This happened under the assumption that the governing bodies would be better able to manage and be more accountable than local education authorities. Field (2013:1), Farrell and Law (2009:5) agreed that the legislation called Education Act 1980 made it compulsory for each school in England and Wales to have a governing body, and it established the requirement for parental and teacher representation. The intention to drive this legislation was partly to improve the local accountability in schools (Beckett, Bell & Rhodes, 2011:9; Thomlison, 2013:12).

In the UK, under the regulations, the governing body should not be constituted of fewer than seven school governors and this must include:

- At least two parent governors;
- The head teacher (unless the head teacher resigns the office of governor);
- One, and only one, staff governor;
- One, and only one, local area (LA) governor.

However, Farrell and Law (2009:5) also highlight that the total number of co-opted governors who are eligible to be staff governors, when counted together with one staff governor and a head teacher, must not exceed one third of the total membership of the governing body.

In addition, the guidelines add that governing bodies, and chairs of governors in particular, should make every effort to achieve any restructuring or downsizing amicably through sensitive and honest negotiation about which governors are best placed to contribute to effective governance and the success of the school. This may be an uncomfortable process and should be handled sensitively and with care.

Therefore, the guiding regulations are all-encompassing and representative regarding the portfolios of those who are expected to sit on the SGBs in the UK. It follows that all sections of people in the local area community are involved in some way; and, hence the development of a school is enhanced through decisions emanating from consensus.

### 3.4.5.1 Roles and responsibilities of governors in the UK

This section highlights the key responsibilities of the governors in respect of the SGBs in the UK. These roles are conferred to them by the UK Education Act. The key roles of governors in the UK include the three core functions of the Trust Governance model:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the head teacher accountable for the educational performance of the school and its learners, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school, and making sure its money is well spent.

According to Essex County Council (2016:6), the governors' roles also include several other important duties:

- Determining how the school's budget is spent;
- The appointment and dismissal of staff;
- Hearing appeals and grievances;
- Forming policy on the school's curriculum and collective worship;
- Setting standards for learners' behaviour and discipline;
- Making sure school buildings are welcoming and safe; and
- Setting and monitoring the school's aims and policies.

However, the SGBs in the UK are vulnerable to constraints similar to what is the case of the SGBs in India, New Zealand, and South Africa.

Holman (2013:7) highlights the key challenges in the UK as:

- Ensuring articulations within the framework for evaluation and accountability;
- Building capacity for evaluation and for using feedback;
- Ensuring links to the classroom;
- Balancing the improvement and accountability functions; and
- Aligning evaluation and accountability with the goals for learners' learning.

It is important that accountability measures should always aim at addressing these challenges so that unintended negative consequences do not affect the quality of the teaching and learning processes in schools.

Holman (2013:7) postulates that the development of an effective framework for evaluation and accountability involves considerable investment in competencies and skills for evaluation at all levels. Additionally, this includes providing support for school agents to understand their roles and procedures.

### **3.4.6 The United States of America Case**

This section presents the SGBs experiences in respect of the USA to get a global picture of how school governance functions in other jurisdictions.

It is reported that education in America has been characterised by complaints about the ill-equipped high school and college learners, and under-qualified teachers and support staff. Additionally, Schneider (2016:6) posits that there has been a trend of declining test scores and the introduction of policies that totally fail to address and resolve the resistant educational challenges. According to Schneider (2016:8), this is a two-fold challenge of a complexity of factors that exacerbate the education crisis at the micro-level in the USA.

When education planners and policy-makers reviewed their policies, because they projected a risk of further failure in the American education system, especially as far as the learners were concerned, the Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll was set up for the public school parents to measure what the schools were doing right (Schneider, 2016:9). Interestingly, and thus in contrast to the lodged complaints, the response included comments such as, “the standard curriculum, the quality of teachers, and school facilities came in first, second, and third on the list” (Schneider, 2016:10). Not surprisingly, according to Schneider (2016:12), the parents’ responses showed a higher percentage (42%) on the question as to whether the schools were “interested enough in trying new ways and methods”.

Heystek (2011:455) argues that this “... calls for accountable school governors and meaningful educational reforms that continually improve teaching and learning in schools. School governors come from all sections of the community, and all walks of life.” These can be parents, staff at the school, residents or representatives of local churches or businesses in the locality. Compared to South Africa, the aspect of the composition of the SGBs in the UK is similar in that it involves all the relevant

stakeholders within the school system. Therefore, it is important that the SGBs work as a team so they can give their commitment to the school.

#### 3.4.6.1 Composition and appointment of governors in the USA

The composition and appointment of governors is regulated and governed by the relevant government statutes/Education Acts. Depending on the size of the school, there are usually between 9 and 20 people who make up the governing body in the USA (Essex County Council, 2016:2). The council provides advice, support and training and defines the roles of governors (Essex County Council, 2016:4). The involvement of parents, local authority, local churches in the value chain regarding the appointment and operations of the governing body strengthens the body's legitimacy and effectiveness (Essex County Council, 2016:6). This ensures the SGBs reflect the communities they serve.

In the USA, new governors are generally expected to attend a one-day induction course to enable them to begin to make a positive difference to their governing body (Essex County Council, 2016:6). In addition, the training workshops are run to improve the effectiveness of the governing body members to execute their duties professionally. Ultimately, school governors from subscribing schools can register to access online training at no additional cost (Essex County Council, 2016:7). This model motivates the school governors; and hence, such a facility in the USA is credited for providing a supporting framework for the operation of the SGBs.

On the other hand, Land (2012:229) notes that “school boards [in the USA] have been criticised as being outdated and incapable of effectively leading educational reforms to improve learners’ academic improvement. This [weakness in the system] continues to pose a threat to the American educational system.”

However, it is argued that the dilemma can be addressed by proposing meaningful educational strategies and reforms to improve the quality of education in schools. Various studies maintain that even though studies reveal some improvement in the outlook through innovative programmes, there is still a dire need to identify the areas of need and prompt actions that need to be taken to combat the lack of accountability and focus in the American schools.

#### 3.4.6.2 State and federal reforms with regard to school governance

School governance is an important area in the management and administration of the education sector. School boards or governing councils work with the management teams, together with teachers and other supporting staff to make schools effective and successful. However, rarely do the SGBs get the attention when it comes to their professional development to enhance school effectiveness. Beckham and Wills (2014:28) note that research has affirmed the important role played by local SBs in implementing educational reforms. In addition, the constant review of the reforms is a great strategy to check what works and what does not. Reviewing reforms regularly enhances team-building and boosts the mind-set of striving for academic excellence. Schools that have little or no direction at all in terms of good school governance in the USA should, according to Fiore (2014:261), aspire to “demonstrate a heightened level of awareness in terms of educational law and local school board policy.” With their collaborative effort on successful school governors, the SGBs in the USA and elsewhere would manage to tie the necessary loops, thereby linking their duties and responsibilities to the bigger picture of how education itself fits in with the larger society. It is, therefore, imperative for the SGB members to have a better understanding of underlying political, legal as well as connecting educational issues influencing effective and functional school governors and how their counterparts fare on their assigned tasks.

#### 3.4.6.3 Policy-making and governance efforts

The SGBs in the USA have been subjected to some constraints that negatively affect their effectiveness. Those responsible for providing professional development programmes for SB members should ensure that their professional development is on a par with their responsibilities (Willis, 2010:24). The schools’ senior management team should also try to communicate the thin line that exists between their responsibilities and that of the SGB, as well as developing an understanding of the obligations and roles of the SGBs in general, so that they are able to assist and support their governing body. Good governance remains a key responsibility of all who are assigned leadership roles in schools (Willis, 2010:25).

According to Beckham and Wills (2014:26), various critics, including Weeks (2012:2), argue that the traditional leadership and policy-making roles of local SBs have been compromised by bureaucratic intransigence. Consequently, this is worsened by the fact that the authority of the local board lies in its status as a corporate body created by the state legislature.

Therefore, this rules out the power of an individual who would dare make decisions that would be seen to be the governors' corporate decision-making function. In addition, the SGBs have been constrained by a tendency to micro-manage school system operations, and the divisiveness caused by special interest groups. Bureaucracy is associated with the negative impact and delays in decision-making, and hence, this may affect the operations of the SGBs.

In exploring the work and operations of the SGBs, Beckham and Wills (2014:23) elaborate:

When making policies, SBs would examine the current outcomes and compare them with the desired outcomes, while analysing the gaps that could exist. The governing bodies would then put together development and strategic plans to make them achieve the key objectives with greater success.

Willis (ibid.) argues that the commitment of the school to invest in the professional development of the school governing board members is critical to the school's success. Without it, Willis (2010:24) warns, "the school and its learners can underperform, its resources can decay, and it can even slip into insolvency or bankruptcy, as has happened in some cases around Australia in recent years."

### **3.5 CURRENT TRENDS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION**

The preceding sections have explored in detail the various international experiences regarding the operations of the SGBs. It has been highlighted that the SGBs across the continents seem to have been put in place to serve common goals, but they are equally affected by socio-economic and political factors. This being the case, this section makes a deliberate effort to present and discuss the current trends in public education. These trends have a bearing on providing a plausible analysis and understanding of the role of the SGBs in general.



### **3.5.1 Democracy and Education**

John Dewey (2012:n.p.), a renowned philosopher and pragmatist, echoed that 'education is democracy' (Orstein & Levine, 2010:29). Given this assertion, there seems to be a strong connection between education and democracy. When looking at the words 'education' and 'democracy' at face-value, one cannot see any connection. However, education combined with democracy encourages people to embrace diversity, and the end-product is broad-minded minds. Some researchers always link democracy to devolution of central power (Mncube & Mafora, 2017:113). In support of this assertion, Marishane (2009:78) stated that "the concept of decentralisation came out from the belief that the State alone cannot control schools, but should share its power with other stakeholders, particularly those closer to the school, on a partnership basis." The element of inclusion of various stakeholders in the SGBs conforms to the principle of decentralised administration and management of schools.

In exploring the concept of devolution of power in respect of the SGBs, Deenanath (2013:89) advances that decentralisation in educational governance moved decision-making powers to structures and authorities at sub-State levels. Deenanath (2013:89) notes that the greater involvement of the community in school governance is critical, as it reduces the deteriorating efficiency and lack of effectiveness of the central school system.

### **3.5.2 School Governing Bodies' Governance Transformation**

To realise sustainable transformation of schools, it is imperative to devise mechanisms that will ensure that the SGBs' effectiveness is enhanced by all relevant stakeholders. As such, schools need to adopt sustainable transformation strategies. Todaro (2010:12) equates development to transformation, as he notes that development is multi-dimensional progress in the economic, social and political spheres.

Everything in life goes through phases of change – good and bad. For that reason, continual assessment of whether something one does or works with must undergo transformation for improvement is something that has to be considered. With regard to calls for school governance to be transformed to support more effective teaching and learning processes, it is proposed that the SGBs across the globe should assess whether reforms would boost the positive transformation in governance.

### **3.6 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

This section presents issues related to training and development in relation to the stakeholders in education. Armstrong (2009:134) defined training as the systematic development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by an individual to perform a given task adequately or possibly excellently. Armstrong (2009:136) stated that the purpose of training is to improve employees' performance so that they become more competent and gain greater satisfaction in their jobs, which will contribute towards the productivity of the organisation. Given this view, it follows that training is pivotal in enhancing the effectiveness of members to serve on the SGBs.

According to Beach (2010:79) development refers to learning, and specifically, this type of learning focuses beyond the person's current role. It refers to the long-term personal and professional growth that prepares the individuals for the next role and steers them towards their own career aspirations. To that end, development inculcates some critical skills that will continue to assist employees/members within the SGBs to manage the possible constraints that are linked to the administration of the SGBs.

#### **3.6.1 Understanding of Policies relating to School Governance**

Policies are very important in regulating school governance. They act as pragmatic guidelines from which systems and procedures in an organisation emanate (Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission, 2017:12). To this end, research on the understanding of policies and procedures for school governance has been undertaken and debated extensively (OECD, 2014:40).

However, the successful implementation of effective practices may seem to have been under-reported. Consequently, schools have been struggling to effectively manage themselves regarding the challenge of stepping up to the level of enhancing quality education for the young people who are entrusted in their care (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2011:10). This scenario calls for the strengthening of training and development policies that will promote the effective execution of duties by various office bearers across the SGBs.

To resolve this issue in South Africa, the DBE devised a programme that culminates in a Higher Certificate in School Management and Leadership for which the SMTs

should enrol, so they can have a better understanding of the management of school programmes. However, this course does not cover much regarding the policies or the Act relating to school governance itself. According to Meador (in Baumgardt, 2013:43), for the policy to be effective, it will have to be informative, direct, clear, concise, current and easy to understand.

A specific study on the ways in which schools should design frameworks for effective school governance is still needed. Therefore, schools must collaboratively engage in and design strategies and approaches for capacitating the SGBs. Thus, Kern (2009:29) echoed that there is no fixed, perfect form or approach to governance in schools and consequently, there is no one-approach-fits-all-schools solution. He advanced that “a number of different forms and a variety of policies and procedures are in place in well governed schools, and these differing forms are each effective and appropriate for the schools that employ them.” It is imperative to identify and highlight what the schools in question have in common, despite their “different structures, policies and personalities” (Kern, 2009:27.), and allow each of them to be particularly effective in their approach to school governance.

Study findings by Kern (2009:29) at Waldorf Schools in North America stated 11 key features that contribute to the SGBs’ ability to govern their schools effectively as:

- Conscious agreement;
- Shared vision;
- A Republican approach;
- Cultivation of leadership;
- Separation of policy and operations;
- Operational leadership teams;
- A three-fold perspective;
- Active participation and destiny meetings;
- Ongoing review;
- Communication and trust;
- The collaborative path.

In addition, policy-sharing, well-coordinated efforts and collaboration are recommended everywhere. For the SGBs to be more effective, it is advisable that they

follow a collaborative, policy-sharing model, backed up by an active, well-rounded and extensive committee structure.

It follows that the SGB office bearers require training and continuous development in the context of a well-designed curriculum that addresses ways of enhancing the effectiveness of the SGBs. One of the key policy goals and imperatives should focus on combating corruption in the SGBs and schools through promoting transparency and accountability. In exploring the need for a corporate governance policy framework, Transparency International (2016:38) maintains that corruption in the education sector has been rampant and prevalent, caused by weakening systems and procedures, and the absence of an anti-corruption policy. It is argued that a blend of approaches would provide a better opportunity for the weaknesses of one approach to be addressed by the approaches' strengths.

### **3.6.2 Shadowing of Successful Schools and Internships**

School governors continue to be confronted with challenges of not knowing how to carry out their roles as stipulated by the SASA, how to relate to the teacher and learner components of the SGB, and how to go about the governing function in schools in general. Bush and Heystek (2013:129), and Codrington (2012:179) concur that school governors are confronted with the following difficulties;

- Insufficient capacity concerning key dimensions of the work of school governance, such as managing accounts, appointing teachers, developing policies and the fee structure of the school;
- Difficult relationships between a largely educated teacher corps in the school governing structures, and a largely under-educated parent community;
- Conflicts between parents and teachers around the meanings of governance and management;
- The weakness of communication channels between the SGBs and the provincial Departments of Education; and
- Conflicts between governing bodies and provincial Departments of Education concerning issues such as teacher appointments, the management of schools and learner discipline.

It is critical to design some solutions and suggestions to reduce the negative effects of the obstacles to goal achievement. One of the strong approaches/practical strategies would be contacting and collaborating with/engaging the institutions that have the effective SGBs. This would provide opportunities for experiential learning as well as a platform for emulating the best practice examples.

Knowing what takes place in other schools would also encourage the shadowing governors to understand and emulate what works well to improve conditions in their own schools. The practice itself would make the shadowing SGBs aware of and sensitive to the cutting-edge policies. Furthermore, the shadowing SGBs would have an opportunity to project the future by incorporating emerging national trends into their systems so that they could be better prepared for future challenges.

In executing their day-to-day functions, the SGBs are challenged by several factors, among them technical challenges. Leithwood et al. (2014:2) observe that the distinction between what constitutes governance and what management is, is at the heart of the difficulties that appear to be plaguing all kinds of schools across the globe.

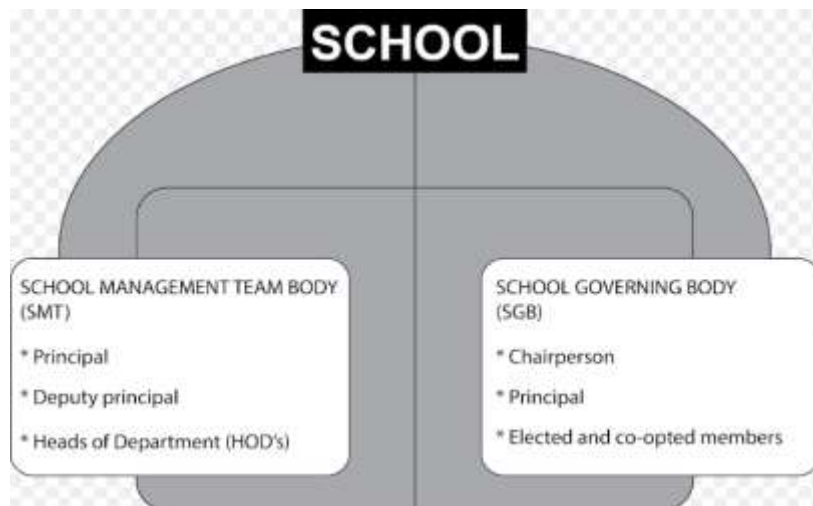
However, the study reveals that teachers still feel that the SGBs serving in their communities go beyond their boundaries to touch on issues that have nothing to do with them. For instance, there is a common allegation that school governors confront teachers about tardiness, absenteeism and lack of preparedness in class because some learners involve the parent component of the SGB to come to school and scold the 'perpetrators'. According to Owens (2016:16), conflicts and inequalities are endemic to the organisational life of the SGBs. However, Owens (2016:18) also highlights the fact that these conflicts and inequalities have not generally destabilised the SGBs, and that the SGBs, despite these conflicts, are still the best means of enabling parents to play a role in the schooling system.

Section 16A of the SASA stipulates that a governing body stands in a position of trust towards its school. For instance, the following are some of the matters that the school governors are responsible for:

- Managing of school fundraising activities;
- Developing vision and mission statements;
- Adopting a Code of Conduct for learners;

- Promoting the best interest of the school.

It is the duty of the school, especially the principal, to ensure that both the SMT and SGB know that their roles are different, and some researchers use the analogy of 'opposite sides of the same coin' to illustrate the separation that exists between the two (Potberg, 2014:8). Figure 3.1 below indicates the separation of roles between the SGB and SMT:



**Figure 3.1: Organisational structure of a school**

(Source: Province of Eastern Cape DoE, 2001)

Based on the proposed diagrammatic separation of roles, it can be interpreted that the roles, duties and responsibilities actually complement each other. Hence, all the parties need to harmoniously work with each other and collaborate on relevant issues. This confirms the assumptions of the Functionalist theory that society is like an engine or a human body with various interdependent organs/parts that complement and augment each other (Anderson & Taylor, 2010:27; Ritzer, 2009:49).

### **3.6.3 Capacity building of school governors**

Effective training of the school governors is an indispensable strategy, if sustainable educational development is to take place in schools. Studies reveal that the SGBs govern their schools intuitively due to a lack of appropriate knowledge of how they should operate better. Mashele (2009:2) recommended that the SGBs be exposed to effective governance, because it can restore order, protect the rights of learners and

teachers, prevent discipline problems among learners, and establish the provision of quality education in these communities. Mashele (2009:16) added that most SGB members cannot read laws, rules and regulations for controlling schools, since they are illiterate or not educated beyond the first few grades of school. This challenge negatively affects the parent SGB members with regard to self-esteem and confidence when decisions are made by the committee. According to Budhal (2012:40), even if the SGBs must make some recommendations on certain appointments in their respective schools, their recommendations are often marred “by favouritism, political affiliation, and nepotism”.

Also, because the SGB members do not earn any salary, not every member is committed to attend meetings and execute required tasks, since it is voluntary work. In so many other countries, research brings to the fore the fact that some school governors get some stipend, a considerable amount of refreshments or a meal as well as a travel allowance for trips to and from their regular monthly meeting.

According to Mashele (2009:140), research highlights various capacity-building strategies that have been discussed by various scholars with the aim of providing these SGBs with some guidelines, so that they can turn their schools into effective institutions that provide high quality education. Ngidi (2014:263) also reckons that providing training programmes for the members of the SGBs in the form of seminars or workshops can play an important role in this regard. According to Ngidi (2014:263), schools should also make it their purpose to elect the SGBs who have “curriculum-related expertise”. To cater for the whole school development, there should be feasible measures put in place to enhance the efficiency levels of school governors. This could assist in resolving the confused state the SGBs constantly find themselves in within their school communities. For example, one cannot expect the parent or learner representatives on the governing body to be knowledgeable about the intricacies of the teaching profession or be experts in financial management. As such, it is explicit that those duties are within the ambit of school management (Heystek, 2011:32).

With regard to financial responsibilities, the SASA does not clearly stipulate how the financial obligations should be carried out. Consequently, this brings about unnecessary conflict between the SGB chairperson and the principal of the school (Mestry, 2013:43). Tensions may arise, considering that both may not have an

advanced financial management background. Xaba (2011:227) laments that those kinds of inconsistencies are in contradiction of SASA stipulations that encourage the SGB to promote the best interests of the school, and strive to ensure its development in all aspects of school management by providing quality education to all learners in the school. Maraj (2010:321) suggests that the SGBs that fulfil the requirements of the capacity-building programme should be awarded certificates of proficiency, which must be linked to the National Qualification Framework and satisfy the requirements stipulated by South African Qualifications Authority.

### **3.7 RESTORATION OF A QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Efforts to improve education in different parts of the world have intensified over the years. These efforts are necessary to empower these nations economically, politically and socially. Individual school districts have also made several attempts to revive the quality of education. Parents need to play their part by insisting on the optimal conditions and best quality input in relation to learner achievement. Although education planners and policy-makers are aware of the challenges that set off the reforms in education, they still encounter some difficulties in trying to bring about improvement at the schools. The SGBs are the main structure within the school that must convene meetings to discuss ways for achieving the highest level of school improvement.

#### **3.7.1 Assessing the Purposes and Progress of Global Educational Reform Initiatives**

For schools to take a step towards introducing educational reforms, intense efforts must be made to establish and implement initiatives that promote quality reforms in schools. It is a goal of the SGBs to boost academic performance, achieve teacher satisfaction and good organisational culture. SBs are generally goal-oriented, and they combine resources and knowledge available to them to equip teachers and improve learners' learning. Research indicates that new leadership in SBs is adopting a new trend of using achievement data collected from school districts and schools to bolster accountability efforts.

Focusing on reading and Mathematics performance, Gross, Booker, and Goldhaber (2009:25) highlighted how schools, districts, federal states and the federal government



adopted a central reform strategy for the lowest performing schools. The downside of that effort was the drying up of federal funding, leaving behind a policy with little efforts done to assess the positive effect the comprehensive school reform (CSR) had on learner achievement.

Therefore, it was imperative to test the hypothesis to determine whether the implementation of CSR on learner performance will vary across different types of learners and in different types of schools. There is no guarantee that more spending on education will improve academic achievement. Data from the American polls reflects that the government allocates insufficient funds to schools, and the lack of resources prevents schools from functioning at their fullest capacity and to their fullest potential. However, the historical trends show that despite far too funding of education, American spending on public education is at an all-time high (Lips, Watkins, & Fleming, 2015:2). Against this background, it becomes justifiable to have the SGBs in South African schools deal with the key aspects related to academic achievement, while benchmarking these against global experiences.

Government should reduce bureaucracy and improve resource allocation for educational reforms to boost learner performance.

### **3.7.2 Democratisation of the Educational System**

One of the common factors experienced by schools in several countries is the gradual shift from authoritarian top-down governance to a democratic one. This dramatic shift ushered in new policies that require active and broad participation of stakeholders in the life of the school through the medium of the SGBs (Mahlangu, 2009:1). However, research findings have shown that the challenges faced by the SGBs in South Africa in their effort to become fully operational and well-functioning, does not make South Africa a unique and isolated case. Compared to the other counterparts in the world, for instance, the UK, the involvement of the SGBs in South Africa needs to be further improved so that they make meaningful decisions that influence the quality of teaching and learning (Mabasa & Themane, 2012:12).

In some cases, school governors may endorse some important decisions, which they would not have agreed upon, if it were not for open deliberations and other considerations. This may be caused by acting on principles of consensus or they may

be acting on pressure exerted from senior structures. The SGBs in different countries seem to experience similar challenges, which influence negatively. On one extreme end, this may demotivate the office bearers as they try to execute their roles from still taking an active part in decisions.

The other challenge lies in under-represented groups that include the learners and women in the SGBs. Concerned about these gaps in the SGBs, Van Wyk (2014:54) recommends a system of cooperative school management which she describes as an interactive approach to education, where all stakeholders are represented and take shared responsibility for the efficient and effective management of the school activities. Even though the introduction of the SGBs has cleared a small-scale space for democratic participation, how the schools implement the governance policy, and the involvement of all the stakeholders still vary widely. According to Naidoo (2015:14), governance in practice is still leaning greatly on the principal, who has been the “most dominant factor” in the past. In all, there is an element of managerial bias when it comes to participation, representation and shared decision-making. Bacharach and Byran (2013:427) call this a prevailing logic of action by the practising institution. The “institutional logic of action” stresses that the governance practices have their focus on achieving the obvious, agreed-upon interests of the school.

### **3.7.3 Striving for Educational Excellence**

One common factor for all the SGBs, and stipulated by Section 20 of the SASA, is that they carry out a mandate to ensure good quality education in schools (Honingh et al., 2018:6). Therefore, their purpose is to see to it that any other factor that is hindering the achievement of quality or excellence must be addressed on time to prevent negative outcomes. It is up to the individual SGBs to ensure that schools develop their learners holistically and to their full potential. According to the SASA, Act no. 84 of 1996, the goal of the SGBs should be to provide the best education opportunities and conducive learning environment every learner could ever wish for (Khuzwayo, 2017:39).

This can be achieved if all stakeholders show that they are fully supporting the school and the teachers who provide these services in schools. Therefore, the SGBs should engage with all the relevant stakeholders to manage risks that could occur, should

governance issues arise in and around the school community. In an attempt to narrow down to specific issues, some SGBs form sub-committees that deal with the SGB business, and these sub-committees in turn should report to the full committee on a monthly basis.

Studies reveal that the SGBs that continue working through policies, without disregarding the Acts and Constitution of the country, are effective and safe (Mahlangu, 2009:201). It can be argued that by adhering to policies, the SGBs would also remain relevant. This will also ensure that their authority and related decision-making is safeguarded by the official rules, regulations and guidelines. It is the responsibility of the SGBs to make all the school policies available to parents, learners, teachers, and all stakeholders who have the special interest of the school at heart, in an effort to allow them to familiarise themselves with the policies and rules.

The SGBs should always strive for excellence as they execute their mandate. Thus, the SGBs are equally expected to govern schools in an accountable manner that fosters an environment of mutual respect, support and trust. Dlamini (2014:5) posits that there should be a good working relationship between governing bodies and school management and leadership to prevent any potential conflict and friction. To enhance the efficiency of the SGBs and school management, and enhance their collaboration, the DoE sometimes conducts workshops, conferences and seminar.

### **3.7.4 Promoting Social Justice in Schools**

According to Connell (2012:681), social justice in education does not only involve equality in the delivery of education services, but also deals with the nature of the service itself, and the benefits to society. One should not consider the concept of social justice superficially as referring to levelling of social clusters, but rather in its broader, all-inclusive definition. Robertson and Dale (2013:429) argues that there is a demand for education governance innovation to connect and engage with social justice theories that “go beyond the re/distribution of education inputs and outputs, which take account of the political and accountability issues raised by globalising of education governance activity”. All stakeholders in education should have access to the necessary supporting resources and opportunities that can help improve their performance as they strive for excellence. For instance, in addition to circulars, policies

and laws that guide the educational processes, there should be workshops where the implementation of the procedures and processes are discussed and evaluated. It is the responsibility of the whole school community to contribute positively to school effectiveness.

In addition, there should be a clear separation of roles and jurisdiction between school principals and chairpersons of the SGBs. This also calls for bridges to be strengthened between school principals and chairpersons of the SGBs by understanding what their roles are supposed to be. Khuzwayo (2017:2) acknowledges that if the relationship between the two leaders is not conducive to the positive functioning of the school, the culture of learning and teaching is likely to be negatively affected. A clear understanding of neat separation of activities as per post description would reduce friction that commonly arises between the school management and governors. According to Dean (2011:12), where roles are not clear, this creates problems between parent governors and principals when responsibilities are performed. Research illustrates cases where some members of the SGBs wait at the schools to 'catch' teachers who come to school late and follow up on the staff members who are absent from school (Dean, 2011:12). It can be argued that this type of behaviour destroys the ultimate purpose of collaboration, cooperation, and community support that is so much desired by the schools.

The concept of social justice and protection of rights can be threatened by the overlapping of roles. Given this situation, the chairperson of the SGB, for instance, may confront teachers about their failure to carry out teaching responsibilities, raise discipline issues and absenteeism. Consequently, the teachers may not be comfortable with such dual reporting and accountability channels, hence possibilities of conflict arise.

### **3.8 BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Baumgardt (2013:91) argues that in order for the system to be effective, it has to achieve the desired objectives and outcomes. Additionally, she notes that the education system in other countries and in South Africa is still overshadowed by a lack of true democracy. It has been argued that the lack of democracy is precipitated by factors such as economic, political, racial and class discrimination, respectively. Public

school governance still encounters tremendous challenges regarding how to effectively and democratically govern the schools. Education managers and policy-makers should have the Constitution handy as a democratic school governance and leadership legal document that guides them.

According to Bray and Mitchell (2009:31), the South African constitutional democracy is built upon democratic values and principles, including human rights and freedoms. Linked to this is the idea of collaborative, policy-sharing and versatile schools premised on the belief that learning together is stronger and better than learning alone. Therefore, shared and collaborative experiences from other individuals would generate meaningful ideas that enrich and consequently aid the effectiveness of the SGBs.

The notion of equality and diversity prompts the stakeholders in education to embrace human rights, which are one of the priorities of the education system. Malherbe (2014:27) discusses the right to equality, which is interlinked with the right to equal opportunities in education, and the right to education in terms of the values embedded in the Constitution. According to Malherbe (2014:28), there is a need to balance the constitutional values of dignity, equality and freedom when pursuing equal education opportunities. Even though the school governors are diverse in backgrounds, they may have the opportunity to reflect and enjoy equal opportunities in education, if the funding is shared equally.

Private schools and schools situated in wealthier suburbs, attended by learners coming from higher-income group families set their standards so high that the other groups (poorer families) are automatically eliminated from competing. First, if one of the requirements to be nominated is having a child in that school, it is always only a few wealthier black parents who can afford to pay the exorbitant fees charged at most privileged schools. Second, one of the requirements to serve as a member of the SGB, especially in privileged schools, is expertise in or exposure to financial management, communication and engaging in negotiations. Schools in rural areas, in informal settlements and in poorer communities will not have access to the SGB members with such qualifications. Therefore, it is near impossible to achieve total equality of opportunities in order to see some or major improvements in schools that are still lagging behind in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Efficient systems are judged

by the calibre of learners they produce, possessing strong leadership, citizenship and employability (Tondi & Nelani, 2017:8). However, poorer schools could appeal to the authorities to acquire 'mentors' with the necessary skills to serve on their SGBs to enhance the possibilities these schools need to envision and implement.

### **3.8.1 Acquisition of Knowledge, Skills and Values**

The management and administration of the SGBs require knowledge, skills, and values that guide the office bearers. This is critical because the interpretation of the relevant policies and Acts hinges on one's ability to acquire knowledge, skills, and the appropriate values. Haralambos and Holborn (2012:12) define values as those attributes that are considered worth thriving for in society.

One of the key roles of the SGB is to ensure that the school provides quality education. Thus, the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values should be prioritised. Therefore, learning from other people's experiences becomes a necessity because knowledge and skills are acquired. John Dewey is a highly credited philosopher who advocated for experiential and pragmatic learning as the 'golden rule' for successful acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values (Rusk & Scotland, 2010:47).

Successful school boards may be used as models by others that may seem to be struggling to meet the needs of their school communities. In addition, exchange visits among the SGBs may help through engaging in observation of current routines and procedures. Thus, this would create a platform where the participants would be able to address and redress their challenges.

Chaka (2018:27) reveals that various studies conducted on the functions of the SGBs reflect that the SGB members do not have the necessary knowledge and skills required to undertake their responsibilities. As a result, the SGBs rely heavily on the inputs made by the principals and teachers in terms of the processes of decision-making, and they agree fully with the decisions made by the school personnel. Chaka (2018:29) further explains that the reason African parents are under-represented on the SGBs is that they do not make themselves available to be elected as they may feel intimidated and overwhelmed by the demands. This will be particularly prevalent among parents who have not had any relevant schooling. The English proficiency level also affects the less literate school governors as they are obviously not confident

during meetings and workshops. Deenanath (2013:76) avers that less literate people constitute one of the groups that are marginalised in the SGBs. Growth in all areas of one's life happens when those involved allow themselves to identify the areas of needs and possible risks and are ready to learn and improve from their mistakes.

### **3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The chapter has discussed the approaches, trends and capacities of the SGBs on an international base, while exploring the best practices and challenges regarding their functions. The discussion has highlighted the various the SGB experiences in countries such as Australia, Germany, India, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. This chapter focused on how effective the roles of the SGBs are, given their various contexts. It has been noted that the concept of the SGBs is universal. Thus, globally, the SGBs are mandated to improve school conditions, strengthen stakeholder relations and enhance learner achievement. The ultimate goal of effective schools is to ensure that there is effective learning, marked by increased learning achievement, so that learners ultimately will be able to contribute productively to society. It was also observed that despite the existing challenges, the SGBs are a necessity when it comes to policy initiatives targeted at enhancing quality teaching and learning processes in schools. The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology adopted by the study. It will make a deliberate attempt to outline all the data collection and data analysis procedures.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1 was devoted to the introduction of the study and formulation of the research problem, while Chapter 2 explored the context of the organisation, management and governance of schools in South Africa. Chapter 3 presented a critical review of literature on the management and governance of schools from an international perspective, and explored the best practices, theories and discourses on the subject. It looked at the effectiveness of school governors from different countries in the discharge of their roles and responsibilities, and identified gaps and challenges faced by different countries in their efforts to enhance quality teaching and learning. This chapter now presents a detailed description of the research methodology that was implemented in this research study.

Research can be defined as “an activity that involves finding out, in a systematic way, things you did not know” (Walliman & Walliman, 2011:7). Brown (2016:3) defines methodology as the philosophical framework within which the research is conducted or the foundation upon which the research is based. O’Leary (2014:85) describes methodology as the framework that is associated with a particular set of paradigmatic assumptions that researchers use to conduct research. Therefore, the researcher argues that the research methodology chapter describes research methods, approaches, and designs in detail, highlighting those used throughout the study, justifying the choice through describing merits and demerits of each approach and design, taking into account their practical applicability to the research in question.

This chapter explores all the methods, techniques and procedures used to study the research problem and generate data. It discusses the research design that was used and the reasons for its selection. It also describes the population, the sampling method, and instruments used in data collection as well as the steps followed in selecting the research participants. The chapter describes the sources and nature of the data used in the study. The key issues related to the ethical considerations, dependability, and trustworthiness of data are explored in detail. The chapter explores



the data analysis procedures employed in this study. The next section presents the research philosophies underpinning the entire study.

## **4.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHIES**

This study utilised the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm places emphasis on both experience and interpretation. This paradigm is informed by philosophical assumptions about three things; namely, ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

### **4.2.1 Ontology**

Ontology is the nature of reality (Hudson & Ozanne, 2010:22). It is a system of belief that reflects an interpretation of an individual about what constitutes a fact. Pruzan (2016:38) maintains that ontology is associated with a central question of whether social entities need to be perceived as objective or subjective. Thus, in this study the social entities were perceived subjectively based on the research methods that were used. In addition, it is argued that the identification of ontology at the beginning of the research process is critically significant as it determines the choice of the research design.

The ontological assumptions (*nature of reality/theory of existence*) governing this study were that the effectiveness of South African schools is dependent on the role played by the SGBs. As such, there is a need to empower the SGBs with necessary knowledge and skills so that they perform their statutory functions effectively. In relation to this study, the reality is that the SGBs are increasingly playing a pivotal role in promoting quality education in South African schools.

### **4.2.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology involves the investigation into the nature of knowledge itself. It focuses on the means used for acquiring knowledge and differentiating between the truth and falsehood (Cline, 2017:1). It can be defined as the relationship between the researcher and the reality or how this reality is captured or known. Therefore, epistemology is viewed as the philosophy of truths, knowledge and beliefs. In this study, the researcher investigated the 'truths' about the role played by the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South Africa. In addition, the participants' knowledge of the functions

of the SBs and the possible impact on academic attainment and provision of quality education was also of great concern.

### **4.2.3 Axiology**

Axiology is concerned with the essence of values and captures the value question of what is intrinsically worthwhile. Another attribute of axiology is that it seeks to expose the "values of being, about what human states are to be valued, simply because of what they are" (Heron & Reason, 2011:287). Values in research are critical, as are the belief systems of participants. Haralambos and Holborn (2012:13) define values as general guidelines or those issues that society perceives as 'worth thriving for'. A study by Kayumbu (2017:38) shows that the violations of the school governance ideals and values are perceived to be detrimental to the effective running of schools.

Consistent with these principles, in conducting this study and to establish the roles of the SGBs in public schools, the researcher adhered strictly to the ethical considerations stipulated in the approved ethical clearance application. The axiological assumptions (*value and belief systems*) of this study were addressed through adherence to ethical standards, observance, respect and upholding participants' dignity and integrity. Ethical issues in research need to be observed, since they arise during all phases of the research process (Redwood, 2005:123).

## **4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGMS**

According to Hughes (2014), paradigms generally offer a way of putting into a category a body of complex beliefs and worldviews. Denzin and Lincoln (2015:157) posit that a 'paradigm' refers to the ethics, epistemology, methodology, and ontology of a study, and they are simply a set of 'beliefs' that will give direction to an action. Additionally, Hughes (2014) asserts that these paradigms "form different ways in which people understand social reality and the nature of knowledge". McNiff (2016:56) states that a paradigm distinguishes between the views of knowledge, and how this knowledge can be acquired and generated.

In this study, the mixed method approach was adopted, leaning more towards the qualitative side. Using qualitative and quantitative research strategies is not without its challenges and controversy, and some scholars posit that there are practical

difficulties associated specifically with the mixed methods research. Combining research methods, in this case qualitative and quantitative research, which mixes two research approaches, is referred to as multi-strategy research (Bryman & Bell, 2017:642). For deeper understanding of the research problem, triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods was used in the collection and analysis of the data. Increasingly, the mixed methods research has proven to be the most preferred term rather than multi-strategy research or triangulation.

First of all, a survey was employed to gather questionnaire-based data in a real-life setting, that is, schools where the SGB members were requested to give their inputs about their understanding of their roles. While quantitative data would probably reveal the statistics of measured variables, and verify the existing hypotheses and theories, qualitative data is ideal for understanding meanings, beliefs and experiences of participants (Wisker, 2017:20). As stated in Chapter 1, it was assumed that a combination of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches would allow for a better picture and deeper understanding of the research problem than the use of a single methodology would do.

#### **4.3.1 Understanding the Interpretive and Positivist Paradigms**

According to Nieuwenhuis (2009:48), “a paradigm serves as the lens or organising principles by which reality is interpreted, and refers to the four research paradigms; positivism, post-positivism, constructivism and critical theory.” According to Raddon (2010:11), there are two main research paradigms; namely positivism and interpretivism. Positivism focuses on explaining, is objective, and is inclined to natural sciences; it is value-free and deals with universal principles and facts. On the other hand, interpretivism is inclined to social sciences, and focuses on understanding rather than explaining. According to Baruth (2013:170), the interpretive or constructivist researcher is able to offer multiple explanations and descriptions for people’s actions and ways of living in a subjective reality. In addition, Hughes (2014) asserts that some variants of interpretivism include, but are not limited to, “hermeneutics, phenomenology, and symbolic inter- actionism”. In interpretivism, human beings give meaning to their world and how it can be interpreted by engaging with the world.

Nighet (2016:1) states that positivists are of the belief that reality is separate from the person who observes it, whereas interpretivists believe that reality and the individual who observe it cannot be separated. Additionally, Bhengu (2015:61) posits that positivists and empiricists aim to predict, control and explain, while the interpretivists or constructivists aim to understand and reconstruct.

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015:64), the interpretivist approach maintains that reality is intersubjectively constructed, based on meanings and understandings on social and experiential levels. This study utilised the two main paradigms: positivism and interpretivism. The positivist paradigm was aligned to the quantitative/questionnaire method, whereas interpretivism was inclined to the qualitative methods. In the interpretive paradigm, the researcher's crucial purpose is to obtain 'insight' and 'in-depth' information (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:26). Qualitative research refers to sound research, based on field observations analysed without statistics (Chisaka, 2010:17). In this regard, the nature of the study required direct observations, and some structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviewing on the natural field settings. Nyawaranda (2014:26) supports Chisaka's assertion, stating that qualitative research seeks in-depth insights rather than statistical analysis. In this regard, the participants' responses were analysed using the themes that emerged from data obtained from oral interviews and focus group discussions.

#### **4.3.2 Benefits and Limitations of using the Interpretive (Qualitative) Paradigm**

The use of the interpretive paradigm is associated with several advantages. In this study, the qualitative methods were used to seek the experiences and perceptions of participants on how their role on the SGBs enhanced the effectiveness of their schools. Raddon (2010:6) argues that in interpretivist research, the researcher assumes the role of a detective, and this enables one to be alive to changes that occur, thus providing greater opportunity for effectively taking ownership of the research process.

According to Willis (2010:46), interpretivism constantly tries to understand a context, and the core belief is that reality is socially constructed. Chong (2010:72) notes that interpretive researchers assume that access to reality (socially constructed or given) is only as a result of social manifestations such as consciousness, language, instruments, and shared meanings. Prabash (2012:2) concurs that for interpretivist

researchers, it is imperative to evaluate meanings, reasons, motives, and other subjective experiences that are time and context bound. There are several limitations associated with the use of the interpretive paradigm. Lincoln and Guba (2010:133) explain that these complex realities also relate to other systems that try to establish meanings, which makes it even more difficult to interpret fixed realities (Neuman, 2010:115). According to Pruzan (2016:6), the interpretivist approach is based on a naturalistic approach to data collection such as interviews, observations, and secondary data.

#### **4.3.3 Benefits and Limitations of using the Positivist (Quantitative) Paradigm**

While qualitative research involves non-statistical data, quantitative research involves research in which the researchers “assume that behaviour of humans like that of matter can be objectively measured through the construction of appropriate research instruments” (Wamahiu & Mwiria, 2015:42). In this respect, questionnaires were designed to generate objective responses from participants (Wahamui & Mwiria, 2015:42). The quantitative data were analysed quantitatively by calculating frequency counts. The self-completion questionnaires were administered to participants to solicit their responses with regard to the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools.

Unlike the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach was found to be humanistic in nature, which gave room for inductive reasoning. Connaway and Powell (2010:77) argue that the quantitative approach tends to apply a more holistic and natural approach to the solution of a problem than does the qualitative approach. It also tends to give more attention to the subjective aspects of human experience and behaviour. Patton (2012:25) argues that qualitative research can be credited for its ability to provide data that is rich and contextual in detail. The use of qualitative research in addition to quantitative methods helped the researcher to better interpret and understand the complex reality of the SGBs’ role in enhancing the effectiveness of schools in South Africa. Quantitative research is not without its advantages; it also helps in making observations more explicit and makes it easier to aggregate and summarise data (Babbie, 2010:24). Thus, quantitative research offers advantage of numbers over words as measures of quality. On the other hand, it also carries the disadvantage that numbers have the potential to lose the richness of meaning. In this

scenario, the advantage of the mixed methods approach is that it gives the qualitative and quantitative research methods the opportunity to complement each other. In this study, the researcher benefited from using the mixed methods approach as the weaknesses of the qualitative paradigm were addressed by the quantitative paradigm.

#### **4.3.4 Utilisation of Positivism in this Study**

According to Hughes (2014), the language of positivity should reveal the “significance, generalisability, reliability, validity, objectivity, and causality” of the content being tested. For example, one can look into the reality of the following statements that are categorised as truth:

- Can capacity building of the SGBs in previously disadvantaged schools prepare them to produce better results in terms of learner achievement and overall success of their institutions?
- Do policies and laws, if implemented effectively, guide the proper functioning of an institution?

Baruth (2013:169) posits that positivism focuses on scientific enquiries, facts, theories, laws, and predictions, and it “makes use of experiments, quasi-experiments, surveys and correlational studies”. The researcher examined how some schools that were historically disadvantaged during the apartheid regime have managed to develop and execute their school strategy since the onset of democracy and the passing of laws for the benefit of the education sector. Positive findings could be used as an encouragement to those public schools that are still struggling. Sarros, Sarros, Cooper, Santora and Baker (2016:464) claim that a correct strategy plays a great role in assisting organisations in translating their vision, mission and values into action.

Leaders are expected to demonstrate knowledge and confidence in strategic leadership and excel as strategy experts. Sarros et al. (2016:462) contend that strategic leadership is all about how the top management team (TMT) influences the strategic direction of the organisation. O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (2010:491) claim that it cannot be one leader in isolation that can influence organisational performance, but the collaboration and alignment of leaders across hierarchical levels that is associated with the successful implementation of a strategic change.

Based on the strengths of the mixed methods approach, the research design for this study was a descriptive and interpretive case study that was analysed through qualitative methods. This study was also carried out by means of questionnaires that were used to evaluate whether the participants see any improvement since the introduction of the SGBs at their respective schools. Moreover, the research intended to determine their levels of development and knowledge of the SGBs in schools that have shown improvement with regard to quality teaching and learning over the years, and those schools where there is no improvement whatsoever (at the end of the case study). A descriptive statistical method was used to analyse the quality improvement survey.

This section has discussed the positivist and interpretive paradigms. It has shown that in this study the paradigms were used in conjunction with quantitative and qualitative methods. The strengths and weaknesses of the paradigms have been highlighted. The next section discusses the research methodologies used in the study.

#### **4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES/APPROACHES**

##### **4.4.1 Mixed Methods Approach and Justification**

This study used the mixed method approach. The approach used a blend of the quantitative and qualitative techniques. It is the researcher's contention that the combination of the two will overcome or balance out the weaknesses of each of the methods (Chisaka, 2010:27). This mixed methods approach falls under the pragmatic paradigm.

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2017:4), the mixed method approach is "a research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study or a programme of inquiry". The uniqueness of the mixed methods approach is revealed in its ability to provide clearer insights that are not possible when either the qualitative or the quantitative method are used independently. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches boosts the chances of gathering complete and comprehensive answers that meet the purpose of a study. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:425) highlight the significance of the mixed method designs and present the design is helpful in "identifying issues, factors and relevant

questions that can become the focus of a quantitative study”. Of course, there are pros and cons in using any method. It is “wrong to look at or oppose qualitative and quantitative as competing methodologies” (Morvaridi, 2012:1193). Rather, research reveals that qualitative research facilitates and illustrates some elements for the quantitative research. Bryman (2009:27) contended that qualitative and quantitative researches are different ways of ‘knowing’. While the application of both the qualitative and quantitative methods allows the investigator to incorporate the strengths of both in order to provide answers for the study, such approach requires a lot of researcher expertise and competence to use them effectively. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:427) state that while the use of mixed methods can compensate for limitations arising from the use of a single method, it requires more extensive data collection, while using both quantitative and qualitative methods concurrently brings about enhanced and clarified outcomes.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:427), the convergence of data extracted from both qualitative and quantitative approaches may also be referred to as the triangulation of a study. Researchers who use both quantitative and qualitative data will balance data gathered from various sources, thereby “resulting in a less linear and more spatial development” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2017:84).

Researchers sometimes refer to quantitative and qualitative research as “paradigm wars”, since the two designs (qualitative and quantitative) are seen as “warring and incommensurable fractions” (Muijs, 2011:3). However, some relationship exists between quantitative and qualitative research in that non-quantitative phenomena can be changed into quantitative ones through measuring instruments (Muijs, 2011:10). On the other hand, there is a clear-cut difference between qualitative research that is regarded to be subjective, whereas quantitative research is of a realist nature. According to Muijs (2011:10), to cater for both research designs, the mixed methods approach is appropriate.

#### **4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Lankshear and Knobel (2014:21) are of the view that the building block for any study is the research design. They perceive it as the broad strategy or logical stance upon which a researcher decides to base the investigation for conducting research.



Schumacher and Macmillan (2009:47) aver that research design brings about a suitable plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer the research questions. Tshubwana (2006:85) concurs that “research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including aspects such as when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained”. For a study to be successful and complete, Leedy and Ormrod (2015:85) suggest that a carefully planned overall design is essential. Clarke and Dawson (2010:71) describe a research design as the “science of planning procedures for conducting studies to get the most valid findings”.

Kothari (2014:31) defines the research design as a conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. Thus, a design can be described as an outline of the steps that would be used in the data gathering, measurement, and analysis. The central role of a research design is to minimise the chance of drawing incorrect causal inferences from data. Additionally, Duma (2013:102) advances that the research design includes the delimitation of the field of survey, the selection of participants (the size of the sample and sampling procedures), the research instruments, a pilot study, the administration of questionnaires, and the processing of data.

For this study, the researcher had to put in place the plan for conducting the study with a view to derive at credible research findings. In this study, a case study was used as principal research design.

#### **4.5.1 Case Study**

A case study is defined by Aldridge and Levine (2011:24) as an in-depth investigation into a particular social phenomenon. This approach also has a considerable chance to generate answers to questions starting with “why”, “what”, and “how”, and is used to carry out an in-depth study of the situation (Robson, 2013:18). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2015:57), this strategy enriches the understanding of the context of research and the processes being enacted. Chisaka and Vakalisa (2010:179) maintain that the case study strategy has the chief advantage of being applicable to both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms.

Miles and Huberman (2012:68) stated that a case study approach allows for a detailed analysis of a unit singled out for study. Case studies give the researcher an opportunity to contextually study a given situation, thereby adopting principles of both ethno-methodological and phenomenological paradigms (Frankel, Wallen & Hyun, 2010:114). Findings of case studies are reported through in-depth reporting and description of data (Nyawaranda, 2014:26). A case study involves a great deal of investigating issues and thus, it is laborious and time consuming (Leedy, 2012: 108).

Thus, as this study used the mixed methods approach, it used a case study that addressed the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study. In this context, a research technique that includes the use of the questionnaire method, semi-structured interviews and the observation method were used in this study. The case study offered the researcher an opportunity to view issues from the perspective of an insider (emic perspective) as well as an outsider (etic perspective).

One of the demerits associated with a case study is that the research participants may become suspicious and may end up behaving artificially to please the researcher. To overcome these shortcomings, the researcher engaged the principles of prolonged stay in which she went 'native' to be more or less part of the research participants (Best & Khan, 2013:82), and in line with recommendations by Lincoln and Guba (2010:114). This also gave the researcher an opportunity to use direct experiential knowledge in making research enquiries into the problem under study.

Aldridge and Levine (2011:67) conclude that a case study is a strategy that involves close examination of one's social setting in contrast to the survey or experiment. In this regard, the sensitive and controversial nature of the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools required a contextual analogy. Leedy (2012:76) posits that a case study approach allows for a detailed and in-depth analysis of a unit singled out for study. In this respect it follows that an in-depth analysis of the perceptions of informants remained critical in this study.

#### 4.5.1.1 Utilisation of the case study

This study aimed to examine the climate in which the SGBs operate in various school environments, how the SASA requirements are being implemented, the factors that determine the success of the SGBs, and any other underlying factors, which may or

may not have an impact on teaching and learning, or improving learners' achievement in general.

The research was conducted in South Africa, in the Western Cape Province, in the Cape Town metropolitan area. The study focused on the SGBs that have been in office for more than a year. For effective performance of their school governance duties, it is often recommended that the SGBs should be trained as soon as they start in their new roles. Such training or induction helps them to predetermine their challenges and prevent incorrect actions or decisions taking place. For instance, the schools that do not incorporate the training and development wing for the SGBs, at least networking with other well-performing schools could positively affect their intended outcomes. The SGBs that are acquainted with what they ought to do, have an opportunity to measure their performance, guided by the performance indicators as stipulated by the SASA.

There are still many challenges in respect of the parent component of the governing body in South African schools. Duma (2013:101) observes that there are many factors that inhibit positive parent participation in school governance; for example, the educational background of parents, socio-economic conditions, and the absence of capacity-building programmes for parents. Research studies reveal a gap in this part of the SGB representation, as little research has been done thus far to compare the schools whose governing bodies have made progress in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities, since the onset of democracy in South African public schools and those that have not progressed. According to Duma (2013:101), it is imperative that the decentralised governance within the school system produces parents who play a vital role in school governance matters. Although there have been some strides made to examine the effect and success of the introduction of the SGBs to raise the agenda of democratic governance in schools, the functioning of the SGBs in South Africa still faces many challenges on its road to success.

The guiding philosophy underpinning this study is a democratic theory of education. Duma (2013:100) posits that "without a more democratic system of education, the development of a democratic society is unlikely to take place". The research methodology to gather data and suggest some solutions to this study responded to the call made by Mncube (2018:45), who asserts that democratic schools and democracy itself do not grow by chance; instead, they result from explicit attempts by

teachers and schools to put in place arrangements and opportunities that will bring democracy to life. This section has described in detail the research design for this study. It has been elaborated that the case study was the principal research design adopted. The merits for using the case study have been explored. The next section presents the data collection methods that were used and the rationale for using them.

#### **4.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

This study sought to address the question of how the struggling rural SGBs can improve in their task of school governance, and what support they require for this change. Through observation, interviews, and data collection in the form of questionnaires and surveys, the views of the SGBs, school personnel, learners and education officials were uncovered regarding the best strategies that schools could adopt by learning from those SGBs and schools that improved most.

To address the research problem, both a literature study and an empirical investigation, based on a quantitative research design, were undertaken. The researcher consulted relevant literature to provide a critical synthesis of what had already been written on the topic. In addition, the researcher conducted a survey to gather questionnaire-based data in a real-life setting. In this manner, this study made use of multiple data collection methods. The mixed methods approach was used in developing instruments for the research. Questionnaires, documentary analysis, observation, and interviews were used as data gathering instruments. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015:110) postulate that “since all different techniques and procedures have different effects, it makes sense to use different methods to cancel the ‘method effect’.”

Following the recommendations made by Kombo and Tromp (2009:37), this study used quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, namely individual interviews, questionnaires, group interviews, documentary analysis, and observations. To triangulate the data, other complementary methods such as reports of previous research, other service records, policy reports, and oral data, including informal conversations, were instrumental in this study. In support of informal conversations, it can be argued that while people interact in their natural day-to-day business, the information they exchange can be more valuable and useful than a formal group

interview. This can happen when the researcher experiences the participants in their 'natural' setting. The next section discusses the data collection methods in detail. Furthermore, the merits and demerits of the data collection methods are highlighted.

#### **4.6.1 The Interview**

Edwards and Holland (2013:9) defined an interview as a planned and guided conversation. In this study, semi-structured in-depth interview schedules were used. In this respect, the interviewer drew up questions that she wanted ask to seek appropriate responses and perceptions on the role of the SGBs with regard to enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. Leedy (2012:73) maintains that an interview offers or allows both the interviewer and interviewee the chance to clarify their questions and answers. In qualitative study interviews, researchers use oral questions, unless assessing cognitive learning. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:221), the interview technique is "flexible and adaptable". The researcher used semi-structured questions in this study. Although interviews can be used by almost everybody, and responses can be probed and re-arranged to suit the cause, they always have the potential of being subjective and biased. At times, interviews can be time consuming and do not allow the research any anonymity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:221). Since the researcher was comparing two groups: the SGBs in the previously disadvantaged communities, and those in the more privileged schools, a comparative study was utilised. In each case, the comparison was based on descriptive data to determine similarities and differences.

The researcher visited the selected schools on separate occasions and had the chance to interview the participants personally on a face-to-face basis. Since the interviews were face-to-face, the questions were written in English, and the participants were allowed to respond in the language they were comfortable with. The face-to-face interviews also gave the interviewer an opportunity to rephrase the questions to meet the intellectual and literacy levels of the participants. The interview, as a data gathering tool, offered flexibility, as the interviewer probed for more detail, explained unclear questions, and used visual aids to clarify issues (Rea & Parker, 2015:18).

The interview method is a flexible technique depending on the social context, and probing techniques can be adopted to expose underlying facts, perceptions and opinions. Dooley (2015:45) highlights that interviews also afford the interviewer the chance to interpret meanings and attach subjective conclusions (Nyawaranda, 2014:26). The interviews afforded the researcher an opportunity to record verbatim answers given, which improved the response rates. The presence of the researcher in qualitative studies can make some participants feel reluctant to deal with matters of an ethical and sensitive nature. This can be overcome by building up trust between researcher and research participant, where they trust that their information will remain confidential and that they will not be judged for their attitudes or actions. The researcher explained the reasons for the interviews to the participants to get their support and for them to participate.

Data processing and coding of participants' responses is both taxing and time consuming (Frankel et al., 2010:35), as interviews require a great deal of paying attention to ethical considerations. Interviews are generally viewed as incurring high cost in terms of travelling fares, and the time needed to conduct them. The interviewer experienced travelling fares as a constraint as the participants lived far away.

#### 4.6.1.1 Motivation for using semi-structured interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were used with 30 selected schools selected from one province (Western Cape Province). The researcher used group interviews with 90 learners, and semi-structured interviews with thirty (30) school principals. She used the questionnaire method with sixty (60) teachers from the selected schools. Through the utilisation of semi-structured interviews, study participants assisted the researcher to interpret complex documents, decisions or policies in different settings (Grix, 2010:76). In backing the qualitative interviews, Richards (2017:187) maintained that when properly administered, interviews provide detailed insights into study participants' experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and motivations. This section has discussed the interview method in detail, highlighting the merits and demerits of using the method. The next section deals specifically with how the interviews were conducted with various categories of participants, including the procedures followed.

#### 4.6.1.2 Interview protocols with the selected schools' principals

In this study, school principals of the selected 30 schools were interviewed. These were face-to-face interviews. The focus of the questions on the topic guide were to establish the role of the SGBs. Of paramount significance was the great need to gain a deep insight into various prevalent dynamics, since the administrators have experience of handling funds and managing schools' businesses. The principals interface with line ministry officials and other relevant stakeholders in the community. The deputy principals were targets for these interviews. As such, a total of (30) interviews were conducted with this category (principals) of participants (see Appendix A).

#### 4.6.1.3 Interview protocols with provincial administrators

In this study, one (1) administrator was targeted per each province. As South Africa has nine provinces, this brought the overall number of administrator participants to nine participants. A semi-structured interview guide was used. Administrators are a critical category of participants in a study of this nature. They manage the day-to-day education (teaching and learning) processes in a provincial environment. To that end, it follows that their experiences are critical. The focus of the study was on the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. In this regard, administrators have first-hand experiences on interacting with the SGBs at some point, and are conversant with the factors that promote and constrain them. This justified their involvement in this study.

#### 4.6.1.4 Group interviews protocol with learners

According to George (2017:13), a group interview is a screening process where the researcher interviews multiple participants at the same time. The purpose of a group interview is to see how participants choose to stand out from each other and how well participants function in a group of people. In this context, a semi-structured interview guide was used (see Appendix C). Group dynamics are one of the interesting benefits of group interviews, which cannot be present under quantitative research (Padgett, 2018:101).

It is argued that group interviews are credited for dealing with sensitive topics. Basically, there are two types, namely focus groups and natural groups. Patton and Cochran (2010:16) explain that in a focus group, participants are selected to meet sampling criteria. The group seeks a broad range of ideas on an open-ended topic in the context of a formal, controlled pre-arranged time and space, usually audio-taped and transcribed for analysis. The natural group exists independently of the research study in a formal or informal format, where the interview guide is loosely followed and often recorded by written notes. A focus group discussion was used for this study, which afforded the researcher an opportunity to interact with and have access to how people talk to one another.

The focus group discussion may provide a measure of the interaction between people in a group rather than on an individual level; hence, this method may not be suitable if one wants to gain access to perspectives of vulnerable and marginalised individuals. In practical terms, each person in the group is asked to give a brief self-introduction and thereafter, the researcher moves to the 'discussion starter' question, which presents the basic topic for the session and throws the discussion open to the group.

The researcher or moderator of the focus group asks open-ended questions with varying degrees of direction and structure guided by the nature of the inquiry – how broad or narrow it is (Padgett, 2018:101). The aim of the focus group interview was to gather a wide variety of relevant and meaningful views, avoiding for the outcome to be a "lost cause" (Padgett, 2018:101). In this study, a total of three (3) participants were selected at each selected school. Therefore, the total participants selected were ninety (90). Each group had a total of six (6) learners.

This approach was chosen as it was the most suitable one to reveal what underpins this study. According to Ngubane (2015:74.), the focus group is an approach that encourages the participants' active involvement in the research as a learning process at the same time as facilitating data generation. One of the advantages of conducting focus group interviews is that they draw from the synergies of the participants (Padgett, 2018:100). This section has discussed the various interviews that were conducted with school principals, provincial administrators, teachers and learners, respectively. The next section discusses the observational schedules that were undertaken.



#### **4.6.2 Observation Method**

The researcher complemented other data collection instruments by using observation. The observations were semi-structured in which the researcher made attempts to observe and record 'happenings' in schools, upon interacting with participants with an agenda of studying issues related to the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness. This provided a basis for triangulation. According to Scott and Usher (2011:106), an observation provides a brief account of the context in which data is established, so as to understand how participants operate. It also establishes information about the setting and climate in which the interview occurs. In order to obtain a clear picture of what transpires at the SGB meetings, the researcher requested permission to join and observe the SGB meetings in both high-performing and low-performing schools. This facilitated the process of assessing the similarities and differences that existed.

Connaway and Powell (2010:178) define observation as involving the observation of participants in a scientific and systematic manner. Observation entails watching and noting the behaviour of members and recording these observations in an objective manner (Stangor, 2011:129). This makes observations more valid than the other methods.

##### **4.6.2.1 Motivation for using the observation method**

Observation was used to triangulate the information received from the questionnaires and the interviews in relation to the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. Observations are credited for providing the opportunity to record behaviours as they occur, comparing what participants say with what they actually do (Marshall & Rossman, 2010:140). In this study, the researcher was able to identify the behaviours that people had never considered important or relevant to report (Connaway & Powell, 2010:178). Observation proved fundamental in this research, as it was able to discover the complex interactions among stakeholders with the SGBs in a natural social setting. The researcher as a participant observer was able to observe the experiences of different categories of people within and external to the SGB structures, and to assess the effectiveness thereof, and then draw conclusions based on the perceptions of the ideal.

#### 4.6.2.2 Nature of observation conducted

In this study, the researcher implemented non-participant observation, which was largely semi-structured. The observations were complemented by other data collection methods such as interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher paid attention to record all observed phenomena related to the subject under study, and made observations on the SGB transactions, including interactions with teachers, administrators and learners. Therefore, the interaction patterns and language codes used when referring to the subject under investigation were of paramount importance. A total of thirty (30) formal observation sessions were conducted. In other circumstances, data from informal observations were also recorded. This was done with all the selected schools. In this study an observational structured schedule was used as a guide for recording the observed phenomena during the course of the study.

#### 4.6.3 The Questionnaire Method

Data collection methods played a significant role to expose the factors behind the study in question. Most times, data do not naturally exist in a quantitative form; however, the researcher can develop a questionnaire that asks certain questions in which the participants rate a number of statements. For instance, the participants could be asked to put “1” for strongly disagree and “4” for strongly agree (Muijs, 2011:2). In the same way, data can be collected on a number of phenomena, and this can be quantified through the data collection instruments used for that purpose.

According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe (2012:76), questionnaires are commonly used as data collection tools because they are a cost-effective way to gather comparable information from a group of people. A questionnaire is a document with pre-set questions sent to or handed to participants to solicit appropriate responses about a given phenomenon. In this study, a questionnaire with various items was used to establish the participants’ views on the role of the SGBs.

The questionnaires consisted of open-ended and closed questions, which were worded in English. According to Neelankavil (2015:14), open-ended questions have the advantage of giving participants the opportunity to answer beyond the closed options, applying the detail they like to qualify, and clarify issues, thus giving them an opportunity for self-expression. The researcher physically distributed and

administered the questionnaires. A total of sixty (60) questionnaires were administered to the selected teacher participants from the selected schools (see Appendix D).

#### 4.6.3.1 Motivation for using the questionnaire method

The questionnaire saved the researcher's time and financial resources, since they were locally administered. Frankel et al. (2010:59) maintain that a questionnaire can cover a large sample; they also ensure anonymity, and establish greater detail in as far as the handling of sensitive issues is concerned. In view of the sensitive nature and the controversy surrounding the subject of school governing bodies, the questionnaire was deemed to be an effective instrument. In this context, objective responses were obtained through closed questions, whereas subjective responses were obtained through open-ended questions, which generated qualitative responses.

According to Wamahiu and Mwiria (2015:76), combining some aspects of both quantitative and qualitative data made it an effective instrument. On the other hand, a distance between the researcher and the participants can lead to a lack of rapport, according to Frankel et al. (2010:60). Probing is not possible with closed questions; hence, there is no room to attach meanings to the answers of such questions (Dooley, 2015:18). The questionnaire is a rigid form so rephrasing questions may also not be possible (Haralambos & Holborn, 2012:435). In this respect, the questionnaire only relies on intellectual and literacy competence of the participants as opposed to the interview method.

#### 4.6.4 Documentary Analysis

Various official documents relating to mechanisms regarding the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness were scrutinised, following the recommendations by Lincoln and Guba (2010:79). The researcher reviewed the White Paper, SASA No. 84 of 1996; enrolment statistics and pass rates of the participating schools from the DBE records over the past five years as well as minute books, the school diaries of the SGB meetings, and other relevant activities and events, teacher recruitment and retention over five years, incentives for teachers and learners who go the extra mile, and records of collaborations and partnerships with successful schools.

After the clearance by the UNISA Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education, the Education Department granted the permission to conduct the research. Further permission was sought from school heads, chairpersons of the SGBs of the selected schools and Education Department officials. It was from these school principals that the researcher requested access to the desired documents.

The documents constituted a critical data collection method. To that end, the documents that show trends, transactions, and strategies in schools were of importance. The study used a documentary analysis guide/framework with some key themes that were identified to guide the researcher (see Appendix E).

The study also used ministerial vision and mission statements that are displayed in South African schools as regulatory frameworks. The researcher was guided by the principle of comprehensive integrity as propounded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) (2015:18), which focuses on documents related to previous integrity assessments of the educational institutions in question. In this study, the researcher focused on the following:

- Internal integrity (survey of school employees);
- External integrity (survey of school users);
- Policy customer evaluation (survey of experts and stakeholders);
- Occurrence of the role of school governing bodies in enhancing school effectiveness (assessing school disciplinary index);
- The case role of school governing bodies in enhancing the school effectiveness index within schools, assessment reliability (deduction through surveys and inspection); and
- Any relevant Acts (UNDP & ACRC, 2015:19).

It was anticipated that the documentary analysis procedure would provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon based on official documentary support and evidence. In this regard, the researcher made a diagnosis of the existing situation on all sites of the study. The role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness has varying effects. Documents or documentary analysis is an important social research method; it is an invaluable part of most schemes of triangulation and deals with

analysis and interpretation of data gathered or generated from examination of documents relevant to a study (Prior, 2010:7).

#### 4.6.4.1 Procedure for obtaining the documents

The researcher made a formal request to obtain the documents from the school authorities, particularly the relevant official documents. Upon having received clearance from the head office of the relevant ministry in South Africa, it followed that the provincial, district, cluster, and schools' levels were supposed to comply with the directive. Customarily, the Ministerial Directive will instruct the administrators to assist researchers accordingly. Thus, the onus was on the researcher and the relevant administrators to liaise, interact and get assistance for all matters related thereof.

This section has discussed the data collection methods used in this study. The semi-structured interviews, group interviews, focus group discussions, documentary analysis and observations have been explored in detail, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of using them. The next section presents the data collection procedure that was employed in the study.

### **4.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

During the process of data collection, the researcher physically visited the sites of study. This provided her with opportunities for direct interaction with the participants. The qualitative data collection methods used for this study involved the primary inquiry by the researcher. During the research process, the researcher probed to establish the underlying opinions of the participants. This technique is hailed for its ability to unearth critical issues that may not be exposed when using emailed/posted questionnaires (Miles & Huberman, 2012:78). Before visiting these sites of the study, advance appointments were made. This included observance of all steps to uphold the ethical values. The participants' consent to record their responses was sought. This study mainly relied on audio and field notes recorded during the investigation process. Generally, all the collected data were kept with the due respect and confidentiality they deserve.

## 4.8 DATA COLLECTION APPROACHES

### 4.8.1 Action Research

For a clear account regarding this study, the researcher carried out an action research. Action research is sometimes known as participatory action research (PAR). Action research is defined by Reason and Bradbury (2017:45) as “an interactive inquiry process that balances problem-solving actions implemented in a collaborative context with data-driven collaborative analysis or research in an effort to understand underlying causes and enabling future predictions about personal and organisational change”. In the South African context, participatory approaches are recommended and justified, since they answer a strong call in the South African Constitution for citizens’ participation, partnership and devolution of power, and involving the relevant stakeholders and communities more. Koshy (2010:1) avers that action research is a method used for improving practice. Action research has been proven to play an important role as a cyclical process of change due to its stages of development.

Action research involves action, evaluation, critical reflection, and – based on the evidence gathered – changes in practice are then implemented. With the *status quo* of the SGBs, there is no denial to the outcry for change. For instance, Bagarette (2011:3) avers that the SGBs should commit themselves to a collaborative partnership to ensure the effective running of the school, as well as promoting the best interests of the learners in terms of providing quality education. However, principals sometimes fail to perform their school managing role as they should, because they feel taking over a strong leadership role interferes with the SGB chairperson’s role (Khuzwayo & Chikoko, 2009:148).

In such case, it could seem to be the best practice to excel that the SGBs should take the initiatives of improvement, since they are the ones directly involved in answering to the three components of accountability at school level. The three components referred comprise learners, parents, and school staff. If an active, creative and innovative the SGB could spark some enthusiasm in schools, since they would have been afforded an opportunity to enjoy some autonomy, this could then also lead to their own success in supporting schools to achieve more. Lewin’s Systems Model of

Action Research Process includes planning, transformation, and output, which is unpacked as unfreezing, changing, and refreezing (Lewin, 2018:201).

According to Nyambi (2014:1), the introduction and selection of the SGBs was viewed as “an important step towards the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching as well as transparency and accountability to the people who had elected them”. As the SGBs in South Africa emerged as stipulated by SASA, the important concept behind their existence and introduction was governance, which Quan-Baffour (2006:27) posits would be “transformative, inclusive, flexible, and democratic to accommodate the different contexts in which the schools operate”.

Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010:5) aver that action researchers work diligently to bring “immediate change” and improve learning among learners. For Lodico et al. (2010:7), this immediacy of change should still reflect the kind of change that is responsible and defensible, and improves learners’ learning. Since action research is conducted by practitioners to improve teaching and learning, this dovetails well with the essence of the SGB involvement in schools. It seems that an undeniable gap still exists between the literate and educated school governors in privileged schools, and mostly uneducated or less educated SGB members serving in the historically disadvantaged communities.

Moreover, there is a need for separation and clarification of roles between the SGBs and SMTs. According to Deenanath (2013:61), the responsibility of the SGBs is mainly school governance under the leadership of the chairperson, whereas the SMTs assist the school principals with managing the school. The SGBs, SMTs, and the entire school community must work together, side by side, when it comes to the school development plan and designing the mission, vision, and values of the school (Joubert & Bray, 2017:20).

#### **4.8.2 Phenomenological Framework Approach**

Research studies define the phenomenological approach as the one that refers to a particular group of perspectives and methodologies for carrying out a qualitative investigation. The phenomenological approach occurs when one person tries to understand other people’s worlds through their eyes and experiences as far as possible, so that they can probe those experiences fully and understand them. A

lecture on phenomenology (Daniels, 2015:63.) reveals that phenomenology became primarily a set of methods and attitudes for the study of the conscious experience of others. According to Daniels (2015:63), phenomenology is more purely epistemological and methodological, while existential philosophy and psychology in their various incarnations have a spectrum of other philosophical dimensions. *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Phenomenology* (Zalta (Ed.), 2013:12) defines phenomenology as the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person's point of view.

For the purpose of this research, the phenomenological approach illuminates the specific phenomena that need to be identified through the lens of how they are perceived by the actors in a situation (Lester, 2013:1). According to Lester, phenomenological studies “make detailed comments about individual situations that do not lend themselves to direct generalisation in the same way – which is sometimes claimed for survey research”. For the phenomenological approach to have validity, it has to be done transparently, and the reader should be able to deduce information from the findings to the theories, and see how the researcher arrived at the interpretations. Lester (2013:1) contended that it is important to distinguish between statistical and qualitative validity, where the phenomenological research can be robust in indicating the presence of factors and their effects in individual cases.

#### **4.8.3 Grounded Theory Method**

The effective functioning of the SGBs in historically disadvantaged schools is still a myth, despite the ‘freedom’ that was ushered in when the democratic government took over the reins in South Africa in 1994. However, the gap between socio-economically more advantaged schools and historically disadvantaged black public schools seems to be widening, without any indications that the situation will improve. Many scholars refer back to the concept of ‘governance’ in schools. The question of whether democratic governance is clearly understood in many of these disadvantaged schools is unclear. Moreover, if understood, it is interesting to note that the accountability measures and objectives are superficially looked at by all the relevant stakeholders in these latter schools. Khuzwayo (2017:8), after reviewing several definitions of governance, purports that governance could mean “formal authority and influence, which serve as a guiding principle to give direction towards effective functioning of the



organisation". Additionally, even though it is quite acceptable to use 'school governance' and 'school management' interchangeably, they are not synonymous at all (Karlsson, 2012: 335).

This section has presented the data collection procedure that was employed in the study. It has highlighted the necessary steps taken by the researcher, including seeking authority to conduct the research. The next section discusses the sources of data used in this study.

#### **4.8.4 Sources of Data**

This study made use of two sources of data; namely, primary and secondary sources. According to Luck and Rubin (2010:39), secondary data refers to the data collected by others for their own purpose, which are now being used for another purpose. The secondary data used were in two forms: written and non-written materials. Non-written materials included visual documentaries and videos or audio recordings, which were done by historical researches for their own purposes (Saunders et al., 2015:89). The written materials included policies, relevant correspondence and reports. To that end, secondary data were used throughout the entire study as referral points to the matters under investigation.

Merriam (2010:68) defines primary data as those that are collected specifically for a project. In this study, primary data were collected during administering of the questionnaires, and while conducting interviews with participants drawn from the thirty (30) schools. Luck and Rubin (2010:97) argue that secondary data have advantages over primary data; namely, they are less expensive, not time consuming, and they identify methodologies that proved successful and unsuccessful.

This section has presented the key sources of data that were used in this study. Two main sources (primary and secondary) have been identified and how they were used in this study. The next section presents the sampling methods and procedures used in this study.

## **4.9 SAMPLING METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

### **4.9.1 Population and Sample**

Ringrose (2009:39) postulated the fact that population denotes all the potential participants from which the sample is drawn. Moonie (2010:29) further defines population as the entire group of persons having the same characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. While population denotes all potential participants, sample denotes the selected participants from the whole population. Best and Khan (2013:73) define a sample as a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. In this study, a simple random sampling was used to select 30 schools in the Western Cape Province.

The study focused on investigating the role of the SGBs in enhancing the effectiveness of public schools. The study sought to establish some insight as to how those schools have managed change so positively, how they achieved development and reform. It is a fact that change and reform are inescapable (Morrison, 2018:3). Toffler (2010:98.) reinforces the message of inescapable change and reform by saying, "Schools will need to change to become 'moving mosaics' of small and often independent units to become post-modern institutions."

The schools that were regarded as managing change successfully, adopting new and productive and lasting strategies, were observed and debates and discussions took place with them. The thriving schools with a true business benchmarking style were, according to Morrison (2018:10), ones where "one organisation looks at another successful organisation to see how they developed and sustained their successes". These schools were assessed and engaged in conversations.

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2009:287), "the goal of purposeful sampling is to select data which is 'information rich' with respect to the purpose of the investigation." Patten (2014:36) purports, "The quality of the sample affects the quality of the research generalisations." It is therefore imperative to ensure that the sample selected is itself of a good quality. In addition, Nesbary (2010:10) contends that the larger the sample size, the greater the probability that the sample will reflect the general population. To ensure that the sample selected was unbiased and representative of the population from which it was drawn, a simple random sampling method was used. Moreover, to

be able to generalise and address this issue, 30 selected schools in the Western Cape Province were used as a sample. Thereafter, the findings were tested against the wider communities and other parts of the world. The 30 schools were selected in a such a way that they represented different school categories and classifications respectively .The school types were as follows: three sets were public secondary schools; three sets were township schools; two sets were in rural areas, and the 4th category), consisted of two independent religious schools located in an exclusive suburb of a major city. These independent schools are also classified as public schools.

#### **4.9.2 Participant Selection**

According to Fischer (2015:xvi), the need to select appropriate participants helps to achieve the soundness and credibility of the research study. Sargeant (2010:3) advances that to produce credible results, the researcher needs to select participants who will provide useful information for the study. Therefore, in this research, data were gathered by means of observation, questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. The participants included 30 schools (10 in each of the 3 selected provinces) from historically disadvantaged black schools and predominantly white public schools, where 30 principals, 60 teachers, 90 learners and 9 administrators from the provincial offices in the Cape were selected.

The participants were selected through purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques drawn from 30 schools chosen for the study. There was equal gender representation in the sample. However, the number of participants and research sites in this study was consistent with principles of both quantitative and qualitative research in general, and phenomenological research in particular.

Though the SGBs have some theoretical knowledge of their roles, they experience some impediments regarding the actual implementation of their duties and responsibilities. The barriers include, *inter alia*, lack of curricula knowledge, shortage of relevant instructional resources, low level of staff incentives, lack of training and development, and not knowing how to handle the autonomy granted to them by the government and the National Department of Basic Education. Participant observation,

face-to-face interviews, focus group interviews, and questionnaires were used as data collection methods.

#### **4.9.3 Sampling Techniques and Procedures**

The study made use of both probability and non-probability sampling techniques, depending on the stage at which the process of sampling was taking place. The dichotomy between probability and non-probability sampling became a continuum when mixed methods sampling was added as a third sampling strategy (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2017:180). In this research study, the sampling processes were carried out at two levels. The random sampling method was used to collect data that would reveal the shortfalls of the SGBs in the execution of their roles and responsibilities in different school contexts and highlight the best practices from the effective SGBs.

The sampling of the schools was done by using purposive sampling, because of its convenience. It is believed that the purpose of convenience sampling is to save time, money and effort, as some collected information sometimes has very low credibility. To that end, and in certain situations, the selection procedure is directed to the participants who are easier or closer to reach. The choice of participants was done by using the simple random sampling technique. Sullivan, DeJong, Monnette and Hilton (2010:59) believe that purposive or judgemental sampling in principle will exclude certain categories of sample elements, because their presence might confuse the research findings.

In this study, the researcher used her prior knowledge to select and include certain schools to be the cases in the study. This technique was also opted for in view of time and resource limitations, as the sample was conveniently selected. Bailey (2009:78) credited this technique with the merit of being representative, and that it can be generalised over a larger population. On the other hand, this technique does not give an equal opportunity for all elements to be included, since it falls under the realm of non-probability sampling techniques. In selecting the actual participants, the simple random sampling technique was used. Aldridge and Levine (2011:25) support this approach, and in this design, the cases that made up the sample were chosen in a single process of selection from the sampling frame that covered the entire target

population. Therefore, each element or participant had an equal chance of being chosen.

In utilising the principles of this design, the researcher devised a sampling frame with a list of the entire population. The elements were numbered sequentially and were selected by a random procedure through picking up papers in a box. Some cards were put in a box corresponding with the target population. Out of the total cards, some (corresponding to the required number) were marked 'IS', implying 'inclusion in the study'. The other cards were marked 'EX', indicating 'exclusion from the study'. The cards that formed part of the 'IS' cards were eventually considered as part of the sample.

In addition, the selection of officials from the line ministry was done by using the expert sampling procedure. Krysik and Finn (2013:161) posit that expert sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique utilised by researchers to choose individuals deemed to have special knowledge directly linked to the phenomenon being studied. In addressing the aspects of sub-groups that participated in the study, the mixed methods sampling technique known as stratified purposive sampling was used. Stratified purposive sampling is a technique whereby the researcher first identifies the sub-groups of the population of interest, and then selects cases from each sub-group in a purposive manner (Tashakkori & Teddie, 2017:186).

The table that follows shows the study population in relation to the study sample.

**Table 4.1: Research sample size in relation to study population**

		Total sample size	Data collection instrument
Category of participants	Population (30 Schools)		
School principals	90	30	Semi-structured interviews
Teachers	180	60	Questionnaires
Learners	270	90	Focus group interviews
Provincial administrators	27	9	Semi-structured interviews
	567	189	

This section has presented the sampling procedures that were adopted in this study. It revealed that both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed. The next section presents the data analysis procedures that were used in this study.

#### **4.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2012:39), data analysis is a process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts and other materials that the researchers accumulate to increase their understanding of them and enable them to present what they would have discovered from them. Against this background, data from the questionnaires were presented in thematic form, and analysis and interpretation took place. Qualitative data from interviews and focused group discussions were analysed on the basis of recommendations by Lincoln and Guba (2010:5). They were analysed through the identification of emerging themes or recurring themes. In this respect, substantiating data facts were also given to authenticate the research process. Qualitative data generated by questionnaires were used as substantiating data to support objective responses that were given by participants. Additionally, the researcher processed the data gathered, using individual semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and documentary analysis to identify common trends, themes, and patterns that would assist in answering the research questions.

#### **4.11 ISSUES OF CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

##### **4.11.1 Credibility and trustworthiness**

In this study, various mechanisms were used to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Creswell (2013) postulates that dependability/reliability can be enhanced through thorough training on the use of codes and by practice in applying the coding system. In conducting the interviews, the researcher asked questions several times to ensure dependability of the findings. Credibility and trustworthiness in this study were ensured through thick description of phenomena under investigation. The emerging themes were formulated from the research questions, and the participants' typical responses were included in the study findings. Detailed illustration of data is a vital means of ensuring credibility as it helps to show the actual situations

that have been investigated and, to an extent, the contexts that surround them (Miles & Huberman, 2012).

Aldridge and Levine (2001) recommend a test and re-test technique in which respondents complete the same instrument on different occasions to validate the information. The researcher ensured trustworthiness through a 'prolonged stay' on the sites of study to a point where she could be viewed as a native and not an intruder. This enabled the 'natural' responses to come out from the participants.

The use of different data-gathering methods (triangulation) ensured both credibility and trustworthiness. Borg and Gall (2001) recommend triangulation in research, a technique which calls for the use of more than one data-gathering instrument. In this respect, the weaknesses of interviews were counterbalanced by the focus group discussion and documentary analysis respectively; hence, the attainment of trustworthiness. Credibility and trustworthiness (validity and reliability) are ensured through member-checking principles (Chisaka & Vakalisa, 2003). In this regard, the researcher consulted several participants to cross-check their views to see if there was consistency in the manner in which they responded to questions. For questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted with 10 participants to check the accuracy and reliability of the instrument. This enabled the researcher to adjust the questions on the instrument accordingly.

#### **4.11.2 Validity and Reliability**

These are quantitative terms. Reliability refers to the repeated application of research being tantamount to valid evaluation of its validity. Carmichael (2017:67) posits that some scholars claim that "reliability is built in as far as possible through establishing congruence between the research problem, the literature reviewed, the hypotheses and propositions put forward, and the data collection methods used, and by being available when participants requested clarity." Internal validity plays a crucial role to check the credibility of the research. According to McBunney and White (2014:56), internal validity rates research credibility through establishing the logic of the links made between the independent and the dependent variables. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004:774) aver that one useful aspect of mixed methods research is that validity can be enhanced through triangulation of findings gathered from different sources. Creswell (2013:5) concedes that internal validity enhances and improves the

findings of triangulation and allows for the research methods to complement each other where necessary. Some scholars use different methods to obtain data from different sources, with an objective to reach a certain consensus about the rationale of the study (Carmichael, 2017:107). In their description, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2004:789) pinpoint that connecting qualitative findings to quantitative results can in itself add validity to a study.

This investigation aimed to construct such an intertwined framework in which further research could be conducted. Neuendorf (2012:4) cites “quantification of qualitative data, and vice versa, as another validation technique”. It is equally important to ensure that the populations and samples used for study are not small so that they can account for generalisation of the outcomes.

External validity is the inverse of internal validity. Studies have indicated that research conducted in the real-world context carries more weight and has higher external validity than one that is laboratory based. According to Carmichael (2017:109), “the representativity of the various samples, having been selected on convenience bases, reduces external validity.” Carmichael (2017:109) further states that if various samples are represented well in a research, having been selected on the basis of convenience, reduces external validity.

#### **4.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Regarding ethical considerations, Silverman (2010:201) warns that when conducting a study, the researchers should keep in mind that they are in actual fact encroaching on the private spaces of their participants. Therefore, openness, integrity, consideration and informing the participants of their rights as far as the research study is concerned are essential. Hence, Creswell (2013:78) highlights that researchers have an obligation to be cautious while they carry out the investigation and make sure that they respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants. It is imperative for the researchers to be mindful of these ethical issues prior, during, and after the research has been conducted.

Ethics can be defined as moral principles of right and wrong. Thus, moral principles have to guide research. In conducting this research, the researcher had to adhere to moral and ethical considerations with regard to data gathering, analysis, and



presentation (Dehwa, 2012:155). People with whom the research was conducted had their rights, and the researcher had the responsibility and obligation to observe and acknowledge these rights. According to Berg (2009:89), ethics are important to all social and behavioural research, especially when the research involves human subjects. Ethics are there to help ensure that no harm comes to the human subjects, that they are informed of and grant voluntary consent to the protocol of the research study, and that their confidentiality and anonymity will be protected (Connaway & Powell, 2010:88).

The researcher sought informed consent to conduct this research from the various authorities and the participants. The participants' confidentiality and anonymity were safeguarded, with the researcher making sure that the information they provided could not be traced back to them (McNeill & Chapman, 2015:13). The researcher disguised the identity of individual participants at the report-writing stage. This ensured that the information they provided would not be traced back to them, and it also increased the validity of the data provided by participants, as they were informed of the anonymity of their responses. Openness, integrity, consideration and informing participants of their rights as far as the research study is concerned are essential. In this sense, Creswell (2003:78) highlights that researchers have an obligation to be ethical and respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants in carrying out the research. It is imperative for researchers to be mindful of these ethical issues prior, during, and after the research has been conducted.

Above all, the researcher adhered to the list of procedures outlined below:

- Requested consent from the Department of Education and secured the school principals' informed written consent.
- The interviews were conducted after hours to avoid interfering with the normal business of the school.
- Participants were informed that personal information was not going to be released to anyone.
- The purpose of the study was explained to participants.
- Participants were assured that their identities would not be exposed to anyone.
- The participants were informed that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw anytime they deemed necessary.
- The researcher informed the participants that a tape recorder was to be used to record the interviews but only with their permission.

This section has discussed in detail the ethical issues that were considered in conducting the research. The important steps and procedures for seeking permission and consent to conduct research were highlighted. The next section presents the conclusion/summary of the methodology chapter.

#### **4.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter described the method used for this study. It further exposed the methods and procedures of data collection and data presentation, and the analysis procedures. The main research design was discussed in detail. It highlighted the relevance of the case study in researching the problem under investigation. The selection criteria and the sampling techniques were also discussed in detail. The population of the research was made up of 567 participants. The target sample of 189 was selected from 30 schools.

The chapter presented in detail the interpretive and positivist paradigms. The semi-structured interview method, questionnaire method, observation method, group interviews, and documentary analysis procedures were discussed comprehensively as the key data collection instruments. The data collection procedures were also highlighted as an organised way of collecting data. The chapter further discussed the framework for analysing the gathered data to give meaning to the data. It discussed the mechanisms for addressing ethical issues. The next chapter will present the research findings and discussion of the results.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented and discussed the phenomenological research design and research methods that were used to gather and generate data for this research study. In this chapter, the findings obtained using the questionnaire method, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions are presented, analysed, interpreted, and discussed in-depth in an attempt to explain the role of the SGBs in South African schools. The chapter also explains why and how teachers in South African schools should be involved in the SGB business. The mixed methods research was chosen in this study because it “enables the researcher to understand the balanced experiences and attitudes of the participants and informants by aiming to answer questions about the ‘what’, ‘how’ or ‘why’ of a given phenomenon (qualitative) as well as the ‘how many’ or ‘how much’, which are answered by quantitative methods” (Frankel et al., 2010:2).

For a coherent presentation, analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the findings, the present chapter is organised into various sections. The first section presents the demographic profiles of the participants, while the second section analyses and interprets the quantitative findings gained from the questionnaire. In the third section, qualitative findings from the open-ended questions from the questionnaire are presented. The fourth section presents the qualitative findings from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions held with parents and learners. The fifth and final section offers a conclusion and an overall summary of the main issues discussed in the chapter. The summary narratives, verbatim statements and paraphrased responses from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussion transcripts are used in reporting the research findings. The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarised in tables.

## 5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study were 17 principals, 68 teachers, 20 parents, and 89 learners selected from South African schools located in Cape Town, one of the metropolitan districts in the Western Cape Province. The demographic profile of principals who participated in this study shows that all principals started their careers as school teachers, and they all had at least a Bachelor's degree, while others had Masters' degrees as their highest educational qualifications. Overall, the participants were experienced school teachers with teaching experience ranging from 7 to 30 years. The biographical information of principals and senior teachers who participated in the study is summarised in Table 5.1 and the figures that follow.

### 5.2.1 Profiles of participants

**Table 5.1: Response rate to questionnaires**

Categories of participants	Number sent	Number returned	Percent
Principals	45	17	38
Teachers	95	68	72

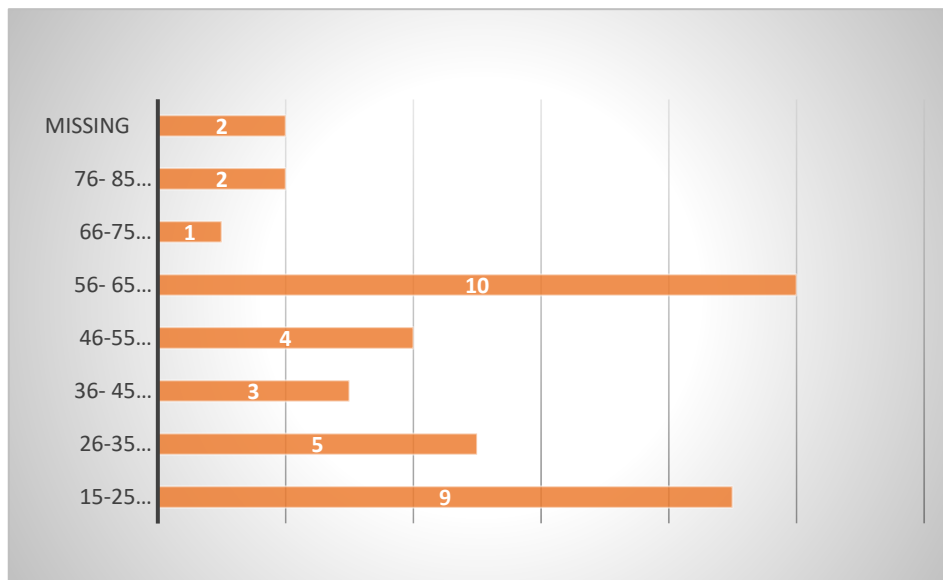
Generally, the response rate from both principals and teachers is relatively high, and the non-response does not compromise the findings of the study in any significant way



**Figure 5.1: Composition of sample by sex**

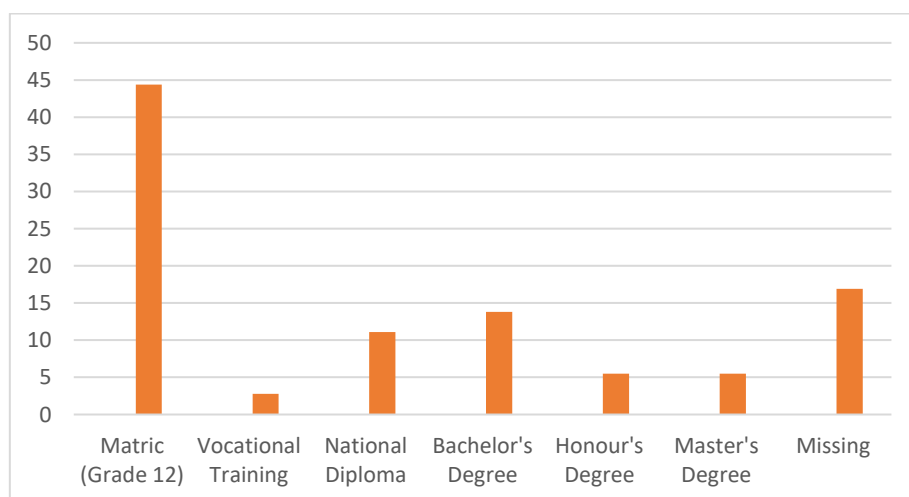
As Figure 5.1 shows, 51.5% of the sampled participants were male, whereas 48.5% were female. This gender composition shows that the senior positions in schools were only slightly dominated by male teachers, especially at the level of school principal. It

is interesting to note that globally, there is a strong bias towards female teachers and principals, while in this study, senior positions seemed to show a strong male presence in schools. The gap in schools between males and females in education has been raised as a cause for concern (Gordon, 2010:22).



**Figure 5.2: Demographic profiles of participants by age**

Figure 5.2 shows the age range of participants. As the figure demonstrates, 92% of the participants were above 31 years of age, with only 8% aged below 30 years. These figures indicate that the teaching force in the sample is not new in their positions, and that relatively a high number were approaching retirement.

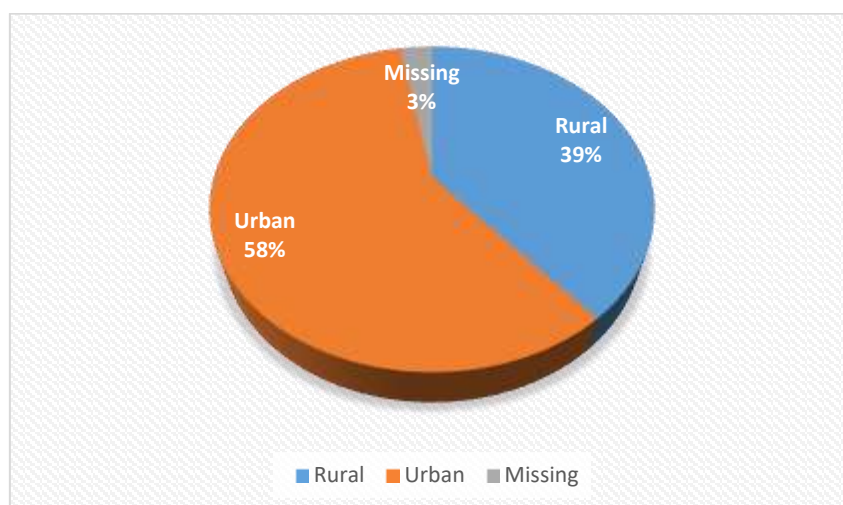


**Figure 5.3: Demographic profiles of participants by highest educational qualifications**

The demographic characteristics of the participants by academic qualifications are summarised in Figure 5.3. Most participants (44.4%) had Matric (Grade 12) as their highest academic level. Only 2.8 % of the participants had undergone vocational training, while 11.1% of the participants were in possession of a National Diploma. Altogether, 13.8% of the participants were in possession of a Bachelor's degree, while 5.5% had an Honour's degree. Only 5.5% of the participants were in possession of a Master's degree.

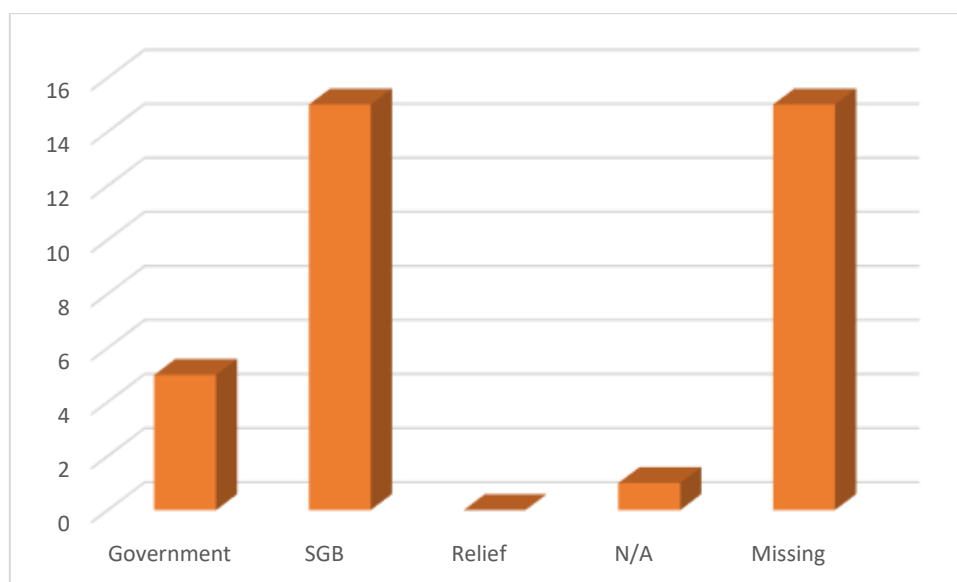
It is interesting to note that more teacher participants seemed to be aspiring to attain higher qualifications. This could be explained by the fact that there is now competition to acquire higher qualifications, a situation described by Dore (1997) in his '*Diploma disease*' thesis. His argument rested on the premise that people acquire qualifications for various reasons, chief among them, the need for recognition. In South Africa, it can be argued that soon after the democratisation in 1994, the government policies were also instrumental in promoting the urgent need for the education system to be upgraded, which was followed by the promulgations of SASA and the launch of the SGBs.

Based on the demographic information, the researcher is of the view that the educational qualifications and the teaching and administrative experiences of the school principals and senior teachers who participated in the study show that they are the most appropriate and suitable persons to provide data needed for answering the key research questions.



**Figure 5.4: Demographic profiles of participants by locality**

As Figure 5.4 shows, most of the participants (58%) were drawn from an urban locality, while 39% of the participants come from a rural locality. Only 3% did not indicate their location. It is significant to note that while large numbers of participants were from the urban areas, the representation may be balanced based on the fact that generally speaking, there are more urban than rural schools.



**Figure 5.5: Demographic profiles of participants by current employment**

As Figure 5.5 indicated, most participants were employed by the SGBs, followed by the government, and there is no indication of the category of relief teachers. A significant number did not indicate their category of employment. The implications of this result are that most participants possess authoritative knowledge and experience regarding the subject under investigation.

### **5.3 THE ROLE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN ENHANCING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

The aim of this study was to explore the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. Specifically, the main research questions this study seeks to answer is framed as follows: What is the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools?

To address this main question, the following sub-questions were posed:

- In what ways do the school governing bodies in different school contexts strive to improve academic excellence in South African schools?
- What are the contributing factors that still condone disparities among the school governing bodies in South Africa?
- How can the Department of Basic Education further equip the school governing bodies in performing their governing role effectively?
- What strategies are adopted by the SGBs to enhance effective school governance and management of resources to improve learner achievement in historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa?
- Why is it important for the SGBs to adopt policies that will later translate into the implementation of good corporate governance in South African schools?

This section analyses and discusses data collected from the participants through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, FGDs, and document analysis, guided by the research sub-questions.

### **5.3.1 Research Question 1**

In what ways do the school governing bodies in different school contexts strive to improve academic excellence in South African schools?

#### **5.3.1.1 Roles and meaning of school governing bodies**

It emerged from the survey that participants were able to define the term ‘school governing bodies’ (SGBs). The vast majority (80.6%) of the participants indicated that the SGBs are regulatory structures that oversee the teaching and learning processes. A further 8.3% of the participants indicated that the SGBs are regarded as parent/teacher committees that deal with policy issues at school level. On the other hand, 11.1% of the participants had no idea of the purpose of the SGBs. While this shows that many participants understood the definitional view and roles of the SGBs in schools, it should be noted that such knowledge is not complete.



Stemming from the open-ended question on the questionnaire to establish how one would define the school governing bodies, it can be noted that there are various definitional views. Some of the definitional views include:

- Participant 1: *Is a statutory body of parents, educators, non-teaching staff, and learners who seek to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the school.*
- Participant 10: *The SGBs are embedded in the South African Schools Act. The SGBs consist of a statutory body of parents, educators, non-teaching staff and learners (from Grade 8 or higher). The SGB promotes the well-being and basic functionality of the school/community by making and revising policies as well as the Code of Conduct for learners.*
- Participant 31: *It is a collective of teachers, learners, and parents in a committee that makes decisions on the daily operations of a school.*

One participant defined the SGB as, “*School governing bodies are parent representative committees ensuring governance at school and school management to deliver fair balance equal education in a safe environment with optimum resources.*”

The study established that the SGBs are defined differently and chief among the definitions is the fact that they are regulatory bodies/committees that assist in the management of schools. Even though it is established that the SGBs support varies, the basic principle, which emerges from the survey, is that they support teaching and learning activities, and initiatives across schools. Therefore, the survey shows that the participants agree with the view that policy formulation and policy implementation are common functions of the SGBs.

#### 5.3.1.2 The impact of SGBs on learners' academic life

Responses from the survey reveal that 61% of the participants agreed that the SGBs have a positive impact on learners' academic life, but 11% did not agree with this statement, insisting that the SGBs have a negative impact on learners' academic life, while 28% of the participants were undecided. This could obviously have some consequences on the manner in which the SGBs are perceived in general. In terms of learners' academic life, the results show that a majority supported the view that the SGBs play an instrumental role in supporting learners' academic life for the better. It

should, however, be noted that support of this concept is not as high as it should be, and the lack of trust in such improvement in learner performance could well be based on fact.

Further to this, the study sought clarification regarding the extent to which the SGBs affect learners' academic life. It is noted that there are several ways in which the academic lives of learners are enhanced. The following typical responses are given:

- Participant 28: *At our school, the best interest(s) of the learner(s) is always in mind and the good reputation of the school. It helps to create the enabling environment in which education can take place.*
- Participant 8: *Because learners feel protected in this sense, they could always address their grievances in hope of better solutions.*
- Participant 29: *When referring to the Constitution of South Africa, the best interest of the child must come first.*

A different view is that the role of the SGB “has and has not been a positive effect depending on how a situation is affecting people involved”.

The study sought to solicit personal reactions regarding the establishment of the SGBs. Thus, the question was asked: How has the establishment of the SGBs pleased you? Participants give a range of responses.

Some of the responses are:

- Participant 30: *It pleased me because it promotes high academic performance and some of its policies give a chance to educate everyone, irrespective of social status.*
- Participant 9: *Yes, I have been pleased, because they involve learners, hence the SGBs enable schools to improve the quality of education.*
- Participant 21: *Yes, because the SGBs provide general support given to management, as all parties at the table collectively make decisions.*

Participants were given a chance to provide reasons on various issues related to the SGBs, being asked: Why do you think that other schools have most benefit from the SGBs' officials and systems?

- Participant 19: *The SGB illustrates the way teachers and learners should conduct themselves.*
- Participant 12: *Early exposure to correct structures are important to development and allows some staff to govern the school process, i.e. teacher appointments.*
- Participant 6: *Because the SGB got to be conscious of everything that takes place at school.*
- Participants 13: *The specific impact of school governing bodies on people include promoting the quality of education in schools and promoting the learners' access to basic services, and principles of achievement by merit.*

It is obvious that the participants' answers show that they are not actually sure why and how other schools benefitted more and in which way. They seem to concentrate only on the overall purpose of the SGBs.

#### 5.3.1.3 The effectiveness of school governing bodies in promoting excellence in South African schools

Responses from the survey reveal that 66.7% of the participants agreed that the SGBs in South Africa are effective in promoting excellence, while only 5.5% disagreed with this statement, insisting that the SGBs are ineffective in promoting excellence. Notably, 27.8% of the participants remained undecided. This perception leads to some contestations regarding the roles of the SGBs in service delivery in general. In terms of the professional growth of teachers, it emerged that the SGBs were trying their best to provide regulatory frameworks that are meant to increase their effectiveness in promoting excellence at their schools. The study established the following perceptions regarding the question: Can you explain the level of effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the SGBs in South Africa?

Some of the perceptions include:

- Participant 12: *They help a lot in governing the schools, assisting the school management team, especially in finances, so that they cannot use the school's money. They form some polices of the school.*

- Participant 22: *I think they are effective, because without it there would be no progress in terms of holding meetings with the principal for problems with the school.*
- Participant 3: *They are only effective if the right people (parents) with the right skills, commitment and time can contribute to the school's management plan, policies and Code of Conduct.*

A different view was that the SGBs are: *"Ineffective, since most SGBs do not understand the role they play in the well-being of a school community and they duplicate the roles of principals."*

Another participant declared: *"In my view, the SGBs are very effective when it comes to regulating the teaching and learning processes, and harmonising the community culture and the school activities."*

One participant remarked: *"Effective to some degree, as the gap between the rich and poor in South Africa is large, but the structures of government, especially programmes provided by government try to bridge this gap."*

What is common across these perceptions is the fact that although there were varied perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the SGBs in their role to promote excellence, the results suggested that the SGBs are accepted as representing the government's goals for an improved school performance, which makes them core to providing sustainable school administration, management and professional growth for teachers. However, the results do not seem to be that visible, as only two-thirds have positive views that the SGBs actually help to promote excellence at the schools where they serve.

#### 5.3.1.4 School governing bodies and effects on a results-based performance management system

It emerged from the survey that participants noted that the SGBs could be having only a limited effect on results-based performance management systems. While only 11.1% of these participants indicated that they strongly agreed with the view that the SGBs had an effect, and 13.9% indicated that they agreed, it means that in total, only

a quarter of the participants believed the SGBs to have an effect on the results-based performance management system.

On the other hand, 27.8% of the participants indicated that they disagreed with the view, and 25% indicated that they strongly disagreed with the view. Thus, the results show that 52.8% did not believe the SGBs to have an effect on the results-based performance management system. An additional 22.2% of the participants did not indicate their response/position regarding the view that the SGBs have an effect on results-based performance management systems.

### **5.3.2 Research Question 2**

What are the contributing factors that still condone disparities among the school governing bodies in South Africa?

#### **5.3.2.1 Attitudes and personal reactions to the establishment of school governing bodies**

Altogether 44% participants indicated that they were pleased with the establishment of the SGBs. However, 28% of the participants indicated that they were not pleased with the establishment of the SGBs. A significant number (28%) of the participants were also undecided on this question. Thus, the results reveal that more participants were either undecided or not pleased with the establishment of the SGBs compared to those who are pleased. Therefore, the perceptions regarding the personal reactions and feelings on the establishment of the SGBs indicate lack of appreciation of the roles of the SGBs in schools. This could be due to the fact that while participants understand the role the SGBs are to play, they do not seem to be making any difference in terms of the promotion of excellence and thus better academic performance of the schools. The participants indicated that a lack of visibility of the SGBs is another reason for the failure to recognise the importance of the SGBs. The results partly confirm the assumptions of the differential association in that some negative attitudes may come as a result of the need to overlook the roles of the SGBs to circumvent the rules. Differential association theory views individuals as having a higher tenacity to diverge from the norms of society when they frequently associate with persons who favour deviance over conformity (Haralambos & Holborn, 2012). The results also show that there was a lack of a supportive environment (11.1%). Therefore, the results reveal

that there are several reasons for the potential failure to recognise the importance of the SGBs.

In responding to a request to provide at least two examples of the problems related to the establishment of the SGBs, participants give the following responses from this open-ended question:

- Participant 5: *Helping the principal and educator to perform their professional functions.*
- Participant 24: *There has been a problem where parents of learners in a specific school are SBG members, which implies that there is some form of special treatment.*
- Participant 14: *Nepotism can be regarded as a problem. Members must be democratically elected and the lack of people wanting to join the SGB and the effectiveness of establishing the SGBs.*

One of the participants elaborated: *“The SGBs are punctuated by a low volunteer rate, the SGB is not always representative of school demographics, logistical problems, legal framework too, as well as elected parents unable to attend the SGBs due to logistics.”*

#### 5.3.2.2 Willingness to receive future training on management of school governing bodies

Most of the participants in this study indicated that they were aware of the need for training on issues related to the SGBs. While they expressed their willingness to receive further training on the management of the SGBs, only about half (55.6%) confirmed that they were willing to receive future training on the management of the SGBs. On the other hand, 33.3% indicated that they were not willing to receive future training on management of the SGBs, and 11.1% were undecided regarding taking part in any further training. Thus, while the results revealed that about half of all participants would appreciate future training on the management of the SGBs, there was a noteworthy section that did not wish to receive any training irrespective of whether they needed it.

In expressing the extent to which the relevant department could institute training for teachers on issues related to the SGBs, the following questions were asked: When and where did you receive training on issues related to school governing bodies? Identify an aspect of the development and name the organisation that trained you?

- Participant 17 echoed: *In 2017 by the WCED Office on roles that are the responsibility of SGB members.*

This indicates that increasingly, the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) training support to schools on the SGBs has resulted in changing some teachers' perceptions regarding their intrinsic motivation and drive to pursue professional development with a view to increasing effective management of schools in general. In analysing the DBE's training support to schools on the SGBs and the impact thereof, one female participant remarked:

- *While I recognise the training support being given at various levels, not much has been done to support females who want to participate in the SGBs, a gendered dimension still manifests; hence, in my view as females, we continue to suffer gender segregation in terms of accessing training opportunities.*

The study identified varied views among the participants regarding the aspects on which people may require training. A question was asked: Which aspect do you intend to receive future training on regarding the management of school governing bodies?

One participant stated that she wanted to be afforded an opportunity to pursue a training programme on effective school management under the auspices of the SGB. Some of the typical responses by participants were:

- Participant 28: *All the areas of the SGB, including policy development.*
- Participant 13: *On how to build and develop the school and to have views on education and discipline.*
- Participant 11: *Financial management and primary schools' policy formulation.*

However, one participant stated: *"I am now completing 13 years as an SGB voting parent member, no need to be trained further."*

There is a consensus that if teachers are afforded training opportunities, their intrinsic motivation to engage in the SGB business and transactions could maybe be sustained. However, it has to be kept in mind that the literature review stated that teachers expected to either be paid for extra time, or be trained within their normal working hours.

In exploring the magnitude of training opportunities afforded to teachers, another participant stressed that it depended on the philosophy of the relevant department, although at school level, some negative attitudes among teachers and parents may suffocate the effectiveness of the SGBs. Thus, a lack of training may affect the day-to-day interaction with issues regarding the roles of the SGBs in schools and their effectiveness. However, it will have to be determined exactly who gets trained, when and on what disciplines.

#### 5.3.2.3 The experiences of private and state schools in dealing with the SGBs

The survey shows that most of the participants noted the vastly different experiences of private and public schools in dealing with the SGBs. Only 13.9% of participants believed that private and public schools experienced the same conditions in dealing with the SGBs in South Africa. This view was opposed by 52.8% of the participants who believed that private and public schools did not experience the same conditions in dealing with the SGBs. It is interesting to note that a third of all participants could not comment on this question. Therefore, the results show that half of all participants were of the view that private and public schools experienced different conditions in dealing with the SGBs in South Africa. Such different conditions would probably also have an impact on the SGBs' roles and effectiveness in schools, for some conditions may lead to poor functioning, while other conditions may result in a far more sustainable development of schools. This confirms the symbolic interactionist theory assumption that in society, social phenomena can be interpreted relatively and subjectively.

Related to this question was the issue of differential conditions of schools that may affect the effectiveness of the SGBs. A question was asked: "Do private and public schools experience the same conditions in dealing with the SGBs?" The following are the typical responses that are given:



- Participant 8: *Private school parents have more resources to inform, engage, bury and solve problems that school management need to perform or operate.*
- Participant 23: *Government has a lot of legislation and regulations on the state institutions.*
- Participant 2: *Private schools are having good structures, supported by well-educated parents. This helps a lot with skills shortages.*

One of the participants added: *“No, because there is a different atmosphere, which induces different results, the level of education in public and private schools are on opposite sides of the spectrum”.*

Another view was: *“SBGs are very important to any institution, regardless of being either private or public.”*

The findings suggest that the SGBs in private and public institutions may seem to experience different conditions, hence this may determine differences in effectiveness as well. Participants indicated, however, that a lot of the differences could be linked to private funding and better education/skills of the parent body at private schools, more so than the statutory role of the SGB.

### **5.3.3 Research Question 3**

How can the Department of Basic Education further equip the school governing bodies in performing their governing role effectively?

#### **5.3.3.1 Through government’s support of SGBs’ programmes**

More participants indicated that the government's support of the SGB programmes would be an effective method to allow the SGBs to perform, with 19.4% indicating that government support would be very important, while 36.2% indicated that such support would be important. Thus, in total, 55.6% believed that government support would improve the effectiveness of the SGBs. Therefore, it can be deduced that government supporting the SGB programmes generally leads to more effective SGBs. However, the results also show that 19.4% of the participants indicated that government support would not lead to equipping the SGBs to become more effective, while 8.3% of the participants indicated that such support would be very ineffective. As only about half

of all the participants believed that the government's support of the SGB programmes would be an option to improve the SGBs' governing role, there must be better options available. This confirms the systems theory assumption that various organs are required to complement structures and institutions in society. In exploring the support given by the relevant department to increase the effectiveness of the SGBs, one participant remarked, *"The allocation of funds by the Department of Education to schools is acknowledged, but it comes as a 'drop of blood in an ocean' in my view"*, confirming that this option would not necessarily lead to a dramatic improvement.

This reinforces information obtained through the documentary analysis procedures, where it is observed that some budgets for this purpose under the auspices of the SGBs are quite inadequate, which is a clear testimony that the ministry's commitment at school and district levels is insufficient. The issue of the Department of Basic Education support for the SGBs was also contested by another participant, who remarked that the department is not adequately or fully providing the level of support that would be needed for the operations of the SGBs.

Regarding the question on state initiatives to support the SGBs, one participant confirmed that the *"Relevant guiding policy and Acts have been promulgated to support the various SGB initiatives."* However, the consensus among participants was that the issue of setting a conducive operating framework for the SGBs and standards deserves a multi-agency response in which all critical stakeholders are engaged in a meaningful manner. Another participant raised the salient point that while the government intervention of trying to enhance the effectiveness of the SGBs remained imperative, in some cases, the *"SGBs continue to suffer because of other operating constraints."*

Regarding the question of whether the Department of Basic Education demonstrated respect for the SGBs, one participant remarked that there is great evidence to support that it has demonstrated respect for the SGBs through the promulgation of governing legislation, although *"there is a need to iron out some other sticky issues."* The common perception from participants point to the belief that the Department of Basic Education is trying its level best to support the operations of the SGBs to enhance their effectiveness, but that there are many factors that hinder the change happening on the ground.

### 5.3.3.2 Through multi-stakeholder engagement to support school governing bodies

Responses from the survey reveal that most of the participants were aware of the various roles of stakeholders in supporting the SGBs in South Africa. The participants were able to identify the stakeholders and their roles. The results reveal that the principals have a crucial role to play in supporting the SGBs. This view was shared by 38.8% of the participants. In terms of whose role it is to support the SGB in schools to enable them to execute their roles efficiently, the parents ranked second after the principal, and this view was shared by 27.8% of the participants. Some 16.7% believed that it was everyone's collective role to support the SGBs, while only 5.6% indicated that it was the teachers' role to support the SGBs. Thus, besides the principal and the parents, very few believed that somebody else should play a major role in assisting the SGBs. Only 2.8% indicated that learners must play a role, and a further 2.8% believed that it was nobody's role. Therefore, while the learners did not really feature, and teachers only at a low level, the findings can still be interpreted to indicate that the support for the SGBs should be a collective and shared undertaking. This confirms the assumptions of the functionalist theory that society is made up of interdependent structures, which should operate harmoniously for the survival of certain structures in society (Haralambos & Holborn, 2012:34).

### 5.3.4 Research Question 4

What strategies are adopted by the SGBs to enhance effective school governance and management of resources to improve learner achievement in historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa?

#### 5.3.4.1 Establishment of similar national structures like the SGBs

The survey shows that 50% of the participants agreed with the view that there are similar national structures such as the SGBs in South Africa, although 38.9% of the participants stated that they were not aware of any similar national structures. Another 11.1% of the participants are unsure regarding any similar structure. Therefore, the results show that about half of the sample were not aware of such structures. In answering the questions: Can you provide at least two examples of national structures similar to the SGBs, the following are some of the typical responses:

- Participant 32: *South Africa Principal Association (SAPA)*;
- Participant 21: *Governing Body Foundation (GBF)*.

The problems faced by the SGBs obviously require some solutions. Thus, a question was asked: What would you propose as some of the solutions to the problems associated with the SGBs?

One participant proposed that *“There is a need to make the establishment of the SGBs more permanent and well known and use prior successes to prove that they work effectively. Thus, the SGBs must work together and be united, deal with drugs and have health facilities in schools.”*

Another participant echoed: *“There is great need to increase awareness of the importance of functional SGBs. Therefore, there should be fewer parent teacher meetings, but more SGBs and learners’ meetings to capacitate stakeholders.”*

While participants stated a range of possible solutions, some participants seemed to have no idea as to what solutions could address the problems. Related to this scenario, a question was asked: Which strategy would you use to help in the school governing bodies? The participants give the following responses;

- Participant 20: *By having more watch on school premises, since learners tend to skip classes and catch on other unnecessary activities.*
- Participant 11: *Try and encourage the SGB members to be visible and transparent and hold meetings at least four (4) times a year.*
- Participant 2: *Invest in a basic financial system for schools, thus a bottom-up approach is proposed.*

One of the participants stated that there is a great need for more parent involvement and training of the SGB members in leadership, community initiatives support, business support (holiday jobs and job shadowing).

#### 5.3.4.2 Establishment of other institutions to support school governing bodies

The results show that 55.6% of the participants indicated that they were aware of the institutions that worked to support the SGBs. On the other hand, 36.1% indicated that they were not aware of such institutions. Only 8.3% of the participants were unsure

regarding this question. Thus, the results revealed that just more than half of all the participants claimed to have knowledge about the institutions that worked to support the SGBs. They were then asked: Can you state the institutions and organisations that work to support school governing bodies? The following responses were given by the participants:

- Participant 23: *The government, if a school governing body is established, it follows that the idea must be approved and endorsed by the government/Western Cape Department of Education.*
- Participant 35: *Departmental officials of the WCED and Governing Body Foundation.*
- Participant 15: *WCED, GBF, Federation of Governing Bodies of South Africa Schools.*

Related to the above was the question: Whose role is it to support the SGBs in schools and why? In responding to this question, the following responses are given:

- Participant 25: *Teamwork is important. Everybody, in other words, all stakeholders should be on board.*
- Participant 36: *For a transparent process of the SGBs, there should be support from anyone who values learners' well-being and academic progress.*
- Participant 26: *The SGBs' success is dependent on all stakeholders of schools.*

This response confirms the concept of collaboration, ideally supported by all stakeholders. At the same time, it has to be remembered that the same participants also stated that it should be mostly the principal and the parents who drive the effectiveness of the SGBs.

#### 5.3.4.3 The use of various educational modes for supporting the SGBs

Responses from the survey reveal that most of the participants were aware of the various educational modes used to champion a robust campaign for supporting the SGBs in South Africa and showcasing the SGBs' role. The participants were able to identify the educational modes. The results reveal that the workshops and seminars are the pivotal educational modes. This view was shared by 33.3% of the participants. In terms of the instruction to 'indicate, which educational mode you would use to

champion a robust campaign for supporting the SGBs and showcasing its role', radio presentations (13.9%), institutional visits (13.9%), and roundtable discussions (13.9%) ranked second, while 11.1% indicated that the website was another educational mode. The television presentation mode (8.3%) and the Facebook mode (8.3%) were also identified by participants as key educational modes for championing a robust campaign for supporting the SGBs and showcasing their role. It is also obvious that the online/digital media and modes have increased in significance, with only a mere 5.6% of the participants stating print media such as newspapers, press reports, journals and annual reports as useful educational modes.

On a far lower level (2.8%), some participants indicated that roadshows and roadblock campaigns are also an effective educational mode, while 2.8% indicated that the exhibitions and commemorations could also be used to champion a robust campaign for supporting the SGBs and showcasing their role.

Thus, the results provide a wide range of educational modes that can be used to champion a robust campaign for supporting the SGBs and showcasing their role. If an effective and powerful information campaign can be executed, this should also increase the awareness of the important role the SGBs have to play. This confirms the common adage that 'knowledge is both power and potential power' (Kamwendo, 2017:2).

### **5.3.5 Research Question 5**

Why is it important for the SGBs to adopt policies that will later translate into the implementation of good corporate governance in South African schools?

#### **5.3.5.1 Policies regulate and support the existence of the SGBs**

It emerged from the survey that 33.3% of the participants indicated that they had some knowledge of South African laws and policies that supported the establishment and existence of the SGBs, while the majority (55.6%) indicated that they did not have knowledge of South African laws and policies. A further 11.1% of the participants were unsure about such laws. This highlights the fact that most participants lack knowledge relating to South African laws and policies that support the establishment of the SGB in schools.

Another question posed was: Can you state some South African laws and policies that support the establishment and existence of school governing bodies? While the question implied that there are existing policies and laws that support the SGBs, very few participants could actually name the laws or policies that were meant to guide or support the SGBs in executing their mandates to perform various functions:

- Participant 34: *The South African Schools Act (SASA)*;
- Participant 13: *The National Educator Policy Act (NEPA)*;
- Participant 4: *Basic Education Schools Act*.

The study further asked the question: Which of the following functions (policy formulation/implementation) are most common to you? Participants showed an understanding of the roles and functions of the SGBs involved. The following explanations were offered:

- Participant 6: *Policy formulation is most common and is the duty of the SGBs.*
- Participant 27: *Policy implementation is common to me as a teacher and it is the role of the school.*

The results show an understanding that policies that enhance the effectiveness of the SGBs in schools should be formulated and implemented. Through policies, the SGBs have a standardised way of executing their mandate, and policies express the existence of political commitment to support them. This confirms the assumptions of the differential association theory that both conformity and deviance are learned. Thus, it is critical to have pragmatic guidelines to assist schools in their coordination and management efforts.

#### 5.3.5.2 Policies regulate the course content for the training on the importance of the SGBs

The responses from the survey revealed that most of the participants were aware of the parameters of the content for the training on issues related to the SGBs, and had an appreciation of the level of importance of the proposed course content for the training. Altogether, 77.8% participants indicated that the basics of the SGB management strategies should be taken as a main course, while 22.2% stated that management strategies should only be an optional course. While 80.6% of the

participants indicated that the ethics and integrity in the SGBs should only be an optional course, 19.9% believed that it should be regarded as the main course. Good corporate governance in the SGBs was proposed to be the main course by 83.3% of the participants, while 16.7% of the participants indicated that it should be an optional course. Thus, participants believed that good corporate governance in the SGBs as well as the basics of the SGB management should form the core course that must be prioritised. It is interesting to note that so few believed that ethics and integrity need to be treated in a course, despite the fact that ethics and integrity are essential elements of good governance. This is surprising, considering the fact that so many participants alluded to the fact that there was widespread corruption in schools and even in the SGBs.

### **5.3.6 Comments on the Findings from the Questionnaire**

The study findings from the questionnaire reveal that the prospects and opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of the SGBs in South Africa are vast as reflected by the responses. The findings also confirm that the Department of Basic Education in South Africa is an important structure that has to play an oversight function to ensure sustainable and effective operations of the SGBs in schools. The findings further suggest that the SGBs should be enabled to adopt the strategies for enhancing the effective running of schools. Generally, the participants notes that there were a number of constraints that hindered the effectiveness of the SGBs, such as the lack of active participation by parents, low education levels and lack of skills, underfunding, and lack of remuneration for the SGB members. Therefore, the level of effectiveness of the SGBs is affected by these factors as well as by negative perceptions and attitudes, as evidenced by the questionnaire findings. Such attitudes have a negative effect on the effectiveness of the SGBs' performance in general. The next section presents the qualitative data generated by the semi-structured interviews that complemented the questionnaire method, since this study employed the mixed method paradigm approach.



## **5.4 PRESENTATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA FROM THE SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

This section presents the overall results gleaned from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Following the recommendations made by Chisaka and Vakalisa (2010:177), recurring themes and sub-category themes emerging from the findings are used. Therefore, the typical responses from participants are included to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. The following codes for the semi-structured interviews are utilised in this chapter to specify the sources of data: PA (participant A), PB (participant B), PC (participant C), PD (participant D), PE (participant E), PF (participant F), PG (participant G), PH (participant H), PI (participant I), and PJ (participant J). Additionally, PSA-PSD is used to refer to 'Parent School A' – 'Parent School B', particularly for parents who participated as informants, while FG1-FGD4 refers to learners who participated in Focus Group Discussion 1 to Focus Group Discussion 4.

### **5.4.1 The Necessity and Importance of School Governing Bodies**

For the purposes of this study, it was deemed necessary to elicit participants' views on whether the SGBs were an important and necessary structure. Asked how important the SGBs were, all participants concurred that they are pivotal in the teaching and learning processes in schools. The SGBs are meant to promote the quality of education offered at schools, which is intended to result in a positive effect on academic attainment. Regarding the perceived positive effects of the SGBs, participants highlighted that the SGBs may assist learners to gain confidence in school as they feel their interests are being looked after by the fact that their parents serve on these SGBs. This theme includes two sub-categories, which refer to (a) regulating operations and setting standards for academic achievement and development, and (b) promoting the quality of education offered in schools. The two sub-categories are critically examined below.

#### **5.4.1.1 Regulating operations and setting standards for academic achievement and development**

When asked to clarify the effects of the SGBs on the education of learners in schools, all the interviewed participants indicated that the SGBs had a positive effect. All

participants said that the SGBs are important in the South African education system and play a critical role in schools. Participants PE and PK maintained that the SGBs promote the learners' confidence and provide an opportunity for fair interaction. Among school the learner participants (FG1–4), some even referred to the SGBs as a protective and enabling structure for ensuring fair access to learning to enhance sustainable academic achievement. The school learner participants echoed that this benefit is sufficient evidence to support the view that the SGBs regulate the operations, and set standards for academic achievement and development. Therefore, the participants' responses reveal that if they are fully functional, the SGBs would eventually promote the learners' spirit of intrinsic motivation to perform better academically. The following are some of the comments from the participants that are consistent with the above findings:

- PC: *It is argued that the SGBs are instrumental in setting some targets and an operational environment that permits effective teaching and learning. Hence, the SGBs may promote growth development of learners academically, leading to sound academic achievement* (School principal, 20 years' experience, interviewed on 8 May 2018).
- School learner: *The school environment controlled by the SGBs is a good one, because our parents in the SGBs will forever love us and will discuss things that benefit our learning* (FG2 final year school learner, interviewed on 10 May 2018).
- PH: *School governing bodies have positive benefits, because they set standards that we as teachers follow. Thus, our operations and relations with the community are standardised for the good of all stakeholders in the teaching and learning processes value chain* (Senior teacher, 10 years' experience, interviewed on 10 May 2018).

#### 5.4.1.2 Promoting attainment of quality education

There was consensus among the participants that the SGBs positively affect the overall quality of learners' education offered in schools in South Africa. It is interesting to note that several participants expressed that the teaching and learning processes are supported by the presence of the SGBs in schools. All participants stated that the SGBs' activities pertaining to the running of the school have a positive effect on the efforts to attain high quality education at all cost. In some cases, high-standard

materials and resources are provided in these schools because of the SGBs initiatives. The participants from FG1–4 indicated that the performance of learners in schools has been aided by the presence of the SGBs, which provides confidence in the entire education system.

Participants also stated that the SGBs promote the moral and ethical development of learners in an indirect manner. The participant learners from FGD1–4 highlighted that the SGBs have been instrumental in promoting their achievement based on merit and that they provided enabling environments for fair competition. Participants PG and PH maintained that the SGBs have a positive impact on the entire process of moulding the behaviour of learners because they provide a framework for interaction with parents coming from the immediate community, who in turn set the cultural expectations guided by the values and virtues of the locality in question. Generally, all participants hailed the establishment and importance of the SGBs in schools.

The following are typical participants' responses supporting the above findings:

- PG: *School governing bodies reward learners fairly by setting acceptable standards of performance measurement that are collectively agreed upon by teachers and parents* (School principal, 20 years' experience, interviewed on 15 May 2018).
- School learner: *Through the SGBs, learners are given equal opportunities to access financial support to further their education. Parents' representatives in the SGBs sometimes take part in the various support schemes and selection processes that benefit learners. So, the underprivileged learners' lives at school are changed for the better* (FG1 final year school learner, interviewed on 15 May 2018).
- PD: *School governing bodies sow the seeds of trust and honesty among learners that may later improve their conduct at school, community and beyond* (Senior teacher, 13 years' experience, interviewed on 15 May 2018).

#### **5.4.2 Role of Parents in establishing School Governing Bodies**

The next question focuses on the roles that parents could play in establishing the SGBs in education. Asked whose role it is to establish the SGBs in schools, all participants maintained that it is everyone's/all stakeholders' role. The overriding

theme emerging from the participants' responses is that the entire school community has an important role to play in establishing the SGBs to enhance academic achievement. Participants PE and PF indicated that it is the government's role. Participants in the focus groups (FG1–4) stressed that parents play a central role in establishing the SGBs. They indicated that the role of parents in establishing the SGBs is evident through their participation in the same structure. The SGBs' roles are believed to be two-fold, one role being that of setting standards for the effective operation of teaching and learning processes, and the other role being that of looking after the infrastructural development, and the related management of school business. The sub-category emanating from this theme is that the government, school principals, teachers and parents play a pivotal role in establishing the SGBs. The sub-category is discussed below.

#### 5.4.2.1 The government, principals, teachers and parents' role in establishing the SGBs

What emerged from this theme is that the government and school principals are strategically positioned to influence the successful establishment and support of the SGBs in schools. Participants PA, PC and PD underscored that school principals are the vital cogs who should spearhead the establishment of the SGBs in schools. Participants PA, PB, PC and PD held that school principals are the directors of the teaching and learning processes, while teachers are the facilitators. Further to this, principals are the custodians of all administrative utilities (financial and non-financial) in the schools.

In addition to this, participants highlighted that the school principals assume the roles of Chief Executive Officers of schools, which makes them privileged to oversee matters related to the SGBs. The participants' responses suggest that the government promulgates the relevant legislation on the SGBs, which is an important aspect of policy formulation. The school principals thereafter implement the policy formulated within the set parameters. It is, therefore, apparent from the interviews with participants (PA, PB, PC and PD) that the government and school principals collectively engage in the establishment of the SGBs in schools, while parents play a major role at the final implementation and supervision stage.

Specific roles for principals highlighted by participants include the engagement of parents and the interpretation of the relevant SGB legislation. Participants PA, PB, PC and PD indicated that principals and teachers play important roles in monitoring and supporting the activities of the SGBs as they interact with them. PA and PD underscored that teachers need to align their actions and behaviours, and those of their learners, in line with the fundamentals and provisions of the relevant Acts that govern the SGBs in schools.

All the participants reiterated that if all the relevant stakeholders could receive proper induction related to the SGB business, they would play an instrumental and strategic role in promoting the quality of education in schools. It is suggested that parents need to play more active roles as they in the SGBs. For instance, a number of participants (FG2 and FG4) expected that in the school, at home and in the community, parents should make more effort to educate the other members of the community about the need for collaborative engagement in supporting the SGBs.

Thus, all the stakeholders supporting the SGBs should be perceived as imperative. All the stakeholders are expected to be proactive in championing the establishment of the SGBs and related initiatives in schools. There was consensus among the participants that in South Africa, the State is better placed to actively engage in the meaningful establishment of the SGBs as well as inculcating the knowledge and values that are considered key in supporting the SGBs. The responses reveal that the parents' representatives on the SGBs are important in the development and shaping of the learners' future lives. PSA-1, PSB-2, PSA-2 and PSD-2 acknowledged that the government, through the DBE, has the responsibility to establish the SGBs in schools. The compulsory introduction and establishment of the SGBs is regarded by participants as an effective strategy for supporting the education of children across the South African education sector.

One of the participants (PA) perceived the introduction and establishment of the SGBs as a necessary intervention meant to enhance the effective management of schools. Parents were also considered by several participants as significant stakeholders who, if they participated on the SGBs effectively, schools would be quicker in achieving their mandate.

Participants' typical comments that support the above findings are provided below:

- PD: *The principals are usually the accounting officers in schools and implement the development of the institutions, governed by the desired outcomes and consistent with school governing bodies' expectations and standards* (Senior teacher, 15 years' experience, interviewed on 12 June 2018).
- PB: *I personally feel that the principal is strategically placed in his/her capacity as leader of institution to adopt and adapt practical initiatives of supporting the establishment of school governing bodies. Additionally, the principal can also insist on and instil a conducive environment that makes teachers, parents and learners appreciate the need for school governing bodies to sustainable teaching and learning processes* (School principal, 20 years' experience, interviewed on 12 June 2018).
- PG: *Principals are better placed to supervise all the projects and programmes proposed by the SGBs and ensure all systems are functional* (School principal, 20 years' experience, interviewed on 15 June 2018).
- PH: *In my view, parents are equally important in the establishment of the SGBs, because they come from the community. Thus, the school activities should not be at a cross-roads with the expectations of the SGBs. It is also critical for parents and the head of the educational institution to operate on the same wave-length so that effective school governance is attained* (Senior teacher, 10 years' experience, interviewed on 15 June 2018).
- School learner: *While I appreciate different roles of people in the establishment of the SGBs, I strongly propose and feel that the SGB Acts must in future incorporate learners so that they actively participate in decisions that affect their learning* (FG3, final year school learner, interviewed on 19 June 2018).
- PF: *From my experience, the government has the overall role in the establishment of the SGBs through ensuring comprehensive harmonisation of community and school relations, and the active participation in operations of schools* (Senior teacher, 30 years' experience, interviewed 19 June 2018).

#### **5.4.3 Support Mechanisms required to Work under Directives of the SGBs**

School principals and senior teachers who participated in the study confirmed that parents are the relevant people who can monitor that the SGBs are supported through

the introduction of school governance initiatives in South African schools. As such, other professionals, such as curriculum planners and designers, can also take part in lobbying in an effort to ensure that school governance is promoted and consequently accepted at national level as a national agenda in South Africa. PD, PC, PN and PM maintained that all support mechanisms must be instituted collectively so that the SGBs in South African schools could have a common purpose to pursue. The need for supportive policy frameworks is also highlighted by participants as fundamental supporting mechanisms.

Therefore, when such policies are promulgated and thereafter implemented at the educational institution level, it would be difficult to work under the directives of the SGBs if there are inconsistencies across institutions. The participants expected policy-makers to be in the forefront of advocating for the promulgation of policies that could be implemented across all schools and act as support mechanisms for the SGBs. PC and PD were optimistic that in South Africa, policy-makers have the capacity and potential to spearhead the ideals of contemporary school governance initiatives, in line with the best practice standards.

It would follow that once the policy-makers have pronounced school governance as a collective and shared vision, it would then become apparent to different stakeholders that implementing such policies according to the letter and providing the necessary support mechanisms, is imperative and not an option. As shown in the participants' responses, policy-makers have a central role to play in ensuring that support mechanisms for the SGBs are consistently and constantly put in place. Principally, it would follow that once the school governance policy is accepted, then the onus of implementation and support becomes a collective and shared function to facilitate the effective administration and management of schools under the auspices of SGBs.

Typical responses supporting the above findings are as follows:

- PC: *Policy-makers are core when it comes to any initiatives to providing support mechanisms for the SGBs in schools* (Senior teacher, 30 years' experience, interviewed on 12 June 2018).

- PE: *In South Africa, we really require a vibrant policy that regulates and standardises school governance issues in a systematic way* (School principal, 20 years' experience, interviewed 12 June 2018).
- PM: *One of the fundamental aspects in my view deals with the provision of adequate funding to schools, so that the SGBs are not challenged as they propose developmental projects for the schools. Without funding, all the support mechanisms will not be effective* (School principal, 12 years' experience, interviewed 14 June 2018).

#### **5.4.4 Ministerial Intervention on Supporting Mechanisms**

School principals and senior teachers who participated in this study stated that the ministerial intervention plays an equally significant role in the provision of support mechanisms for supporting the mandate of the SGBs through ministerial directives. PB, PC, and PD underlined that the DBE is responsible for spelling out all school governance directives as a strategy to provide guidance to the SGBs in schools. From the participants' comments, it is clear that all supporting mechanisms for the SGBs would have to be developed in accordance with the relevant guiding Education Act. What emerged from the discussions with school principals and senior teachers is that the DBE sets the tone regarding what supporting mechanisms to pursue, adopt and adapt in an effort to facilitate the effectiveness of the SGBs in schools.

The above findings are supported by the following responses from some of the participants:

- PD: *The Education Department has the responsibility to intervene and set directives that lead to the effectiveness of the SGBs in schools. Their intervention and initiatives are core in coming up with a robust management and administration strategy for schools under the auspices of school governing bodies* (School principal, 21 years' experience, interviewed on 7 August 2018).
- PD: *If you make a close inspection of the current South African situation, all the SGBs are established and regulated under an Act of Parliament, an indication that the Ministry of Education must seriously monitor the work of the SGBs* (School principal, 23 years' experience, interviewed on 8 August 2018).



- PSB 1: *School Governing Body Foundation (SGBF) is a separate entity that helps the SGBs to execute their mandate and provide legal advice too* (Parent, interviewed 8 August 2018).

#### **5.4.5 Community Projects and Programmes to promote Effectiveness of the SGBs**

For the purposes of this research it was deemed necessary to elicit participants' views on projects and programmes that promoted the effectiveness of the SGBs in schools and in communities. All the participants' responses reveal that the programmes and projects should involve the learners as future leaders of the country. Moreover, most of the participants also underlined the significance of community involvement and engagement, while insisting that school learners should engage in outreach programmes and projects to support the activities of the SGBs.

There was consensus among participants that the SGBs ought to introduce projects that engaged learners in practical and innovative projects based on the needs and interests of the learners. The core theme emerging from the participants' responses is that the thrust of the projects and programmes must aim at the development of life-long skills among the learners. The sub-category emerging from this theme is one of promoting entrepreneurial skills through the SGBs structures. The sub-category is examined below.

##### **5.4.5.1 Promoting entrepreneurial skills through the SGB structures**

Engagement in learner activities that develop, on a regular basis, self-reliance skills was raised by many participants (PC and FG1-4) as an integral initiative for the development of life-long skills among learners in the context of the SGBs' directives. PSD-2, PSA-2 and PSC-1 acknowledged that the involvement of school learners in projects and programmes that enhance the development of entrepreneurial skills is considered the only solution for addressing the negative perceptions associated with the SGBs' lack of effectiveness. PE and FG4 suggested that the SGBs should take advantage of open days in schools to interact with learners and introduce programmes that would improve effective school governance. Besides open days, PA and FG3 suggested other platforms such as holding special meetings to collectively engage parents, guardians and other members of the community on school governance

matters. During such fora, the SGBs may provide a more conducive environment that could motivate various stakeholders to offer ways of improving school governance. Practically, the SGBs should always ensure that there is a constant link between all the stakeholders who are critical in school governance. From the participants' responses, it is evident that the SGBs' roles in mobilising relevant stakeholders and engaging them in programmes and projects cannot be overstated.

The following are examples of participants' responses consistent with the above findings:

- PF: *When the SGB representatives interact with teachers and learners during open day and hold consultation meetings with parents, they will have an opportunity to appreciate the experiences learners are going through, they may identify the existing gaps* (Senior teacher, 10 years' experience, interviewed on 14 August 2018).
- PSD-1: *Whenever learners interact with us in meetings, we begin to have an in-depth understanding of the extent to which they are facing challenges in their day-to-day lives at school; hence, we can find collective solutions under the directives of established the SGBs* (Parent, five years' experience with the school, interviewed on 16 August 2018).
- School learner: *I strongly feel that there is a need to ensure that various platforms are created, so that we have a chance to meaningfully benefit from the interaction with the community under the guidance and initiatives of the SGBs in schools. I say so because there are other problems, which the principal may not solve alone, but require the board to come and intervene* (FGD4, final year school learner, interviewed on 16 August 2018).

#### **5.4.6 Establishing School Governing Bodies: Goals and Themes**

Many participants (PA, PB, PC, PD, and FG1-4) recommended themes they believed would specifically reflect the experiences of South Africans socially, culturally, politically and economically. For instance, one of the major themes most participants wanted to be included in the school governance education curriculum for South African schools is the issue of upholding values of transparency and accountability in nearly all transactions. Transparency and accountability education is believed to encourage

teachers and learners in schools to develop and embrace the communal attitudes of fighting against selfishness or corruption among people. This would discourage the development of self-centred traits and inculcate a positive spirit (*Ubuntu*) towards active and collective participation in school programmes. The current South African school education system, through the promulgation of SASA, is hailed for its efforts to uphold values of transparency and accountability as evidenced by the establishment of the SGBs.

It is important to identify themes in the South African school education sector that have elements of upholding the values, ethics and integrity to develop a common understanding in how the SGBs should conduct their business to be more effective. Some of the participants (PSA-2 and FG1) wanted the inclusion of a 'code of ethics' that focuses on fighting against social ills such as corruption to be included as a major theme in the goals and themes for the establishment of the SGBs in schools. It was argued that such a code of ethics would help in developing principals, teachers, parents and learners who have a common vision in terms of their conduct. On the other hand, the same participants did not feel the need to have compulsory programmes for the SGB members on ethics and integrity. PSB-2, PN, PM, PN and FG4 rather wanted the introduction of systems that would empower the SGBs on effective financial management systems, best practice definition and measurement, testing, monitoring and evaluation of best practices and their procedures.

Typical responses consistent with the above findings are as follows:

- PC: *School governance law and programmes for South African schools should be designed in such a way that all relevant stakeholders see the value of their inclusion in the SGBs' business* (School principal, 20 years' experience, interviewed on 21 August 2018).
- PD: *Through school governance structures, principals, teachers, parents, and learners should be empowered to take personal and collective responsibility in establishing and supporting the SGBs, so that they collectively contribute in making a positive difference in school management* (School principal, 20 years' experience, interviewed on 22 August 2018).
- PSA-2: *In my view, themes for inclusion in the establishment of the SGBs should develop a sense of oneness when it comes to conducting school business,*

*regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or other socio-economic-political variables* (Parent, seven years with the school, interviewed on 22 August 2018).

- PN: *The goals and themes must enable principals, teachers, parents, and learners to express commitment and excel in their execution of tasks that are assigned or given to them by the school under the directives of the established SGBs* (Parent & SGB rep, 10 years' experience, interviewed on 11 September 2018).

#### **5.4.7 Best Practices School Governance Education Goals and Themes**

Most of the participants proposed broader as well as in-depth themes that would assist in defining best practices in establishing the SGBs, for example, comprehensive goals and themes such as 'discovering the potential of the immediate community, understanding the operations of the SGBs in the South African education sector, and appreciating the roles of the SGBs in the region, the continent, and the world.' It is evident from the recommended themes that they wanted improvement on school governance issues. Participants PM, PN and PD underscored the need to develop an attitude that embraces change for the good of the SGBs as well as a code of ethics that promotes transparency and accountability.

Participants' comments that support the above findings are as follows:

- School learner: *In our learning in schools, I suggest a topic such as 'the importance of school governance bodies in South Africa' must be included in relevant subjects* (FG 4, final year school learner, interviewed on 13 September 2018).
- School learner: *I strongly feel that a topic that explores the experiences of other SGBs beyond the South African borders is also worth inclusion* (FG2, final year school learner interviewed on 13 September 2018).
- PSA 2: *I strongly believe that one of the goals for supporting school governing bodies is for our teachers and us to develop competencies dealing with issues pertaining to principal/teacher/learner/community relations. In my view, this must be one of the fundamental goals and themes worth prioritising* (Parent, interviewed 27 July 2018).
- School learner: *In our situation, the main goal will be to develop honesty behaviours and support school governing bodies, deal with the hating attitudes among learners, teachers, principals, parents and even non-teaching staff. Another goal*

*should be to develop a positive attitude towards the need to promote/enhance our performance* (FG3, final year secondary school learner, interviewed on 27 July 2018).

- PC: *If I was given the chance to develop goals and themes for establishing school governing bodies, my pivotal goal would be 'best practice effective school management and administration principles'. Later, I would propose to focus on nurturing a culture of integrity, because that is where principals are missing it, through monopoly and excessive discretion. Once these values are espoused as themes for inclusion in the mainstream of the SGBs' business, it would follow that ethical conduct will be promoted, hence less challenges.* (School principal, 25 years' experience, interviewed 14 September 2018).

#### **5.4.8 Experiences and Constraints for Effective Establishment of School Governing Bodies in South Africa**

The next question focused on the participants' views on experiences, problems and challenges that could inhibit the effective establishment and support of the SGBs in South African schools. The overriding theme emerging from the participants' feedback is that there are a host of challenges ranging from professional/technical, attitudinal and behavioural challenges. These factors expose the SGBs to varied negative experiences, which in turn could inhibit their effectiveness in schools. The sub-categories surfacing from this theme are: (a) the lack of specialists in school governance bodies, and (b) the lack of positive attitudes for supporting the SGBs. These sub-categories are discussed in the following sub-sections.

##### **5.4.8.1 The lack of specialists in school governing bodies**

One of the recurring sub-categories emerging from most participants' responses is the lack of knowledgeable or skilled specialists who can run, manage and conduct the SGBs' business in a professional manner. This, according to participants, may expose the SGBs to a number of challenges and in turn, create some problems within the operational environments of the SGBs in schools. Participants PF, PG and PH stated that the lack of specialists on school governance caused some problems that affected the effectiveness of the SGBs. One of the school principals (PC) stressed that a significant number of the administrators, parents and teachers in South African

schools did not receive formal professional training in school governance matters. In this regard, the understanding of what school governance should actually contain is open to interpretation and this undermines any efforts to standardise operations of the SGBs in schools.

Therefore, participants' feedback points out the need to adequately expose principals, parents, teachers and learners to some development related to school governance issues to equip them with the requisite skills, knowledge and strategies and to support the SGBs in South African schools.

The following are some of the responses consistent with the above findings:

- PF: *The major challenge is that there is a perceived lack of qualified personnel to deal with issues related to school governance; hence, supporting school governing bodies is increasingly becoming a constraint* (Senior teacher, 10 years' experience, interviewed on 18 September 2018).
- School learner: *In my view, I strongly think that supporting school governing bodies is being challenged by a lack of knowledgeable specialists, and this results from a lack of exposure to the required training* (FG3, final year school learner, interviewed 18 September 2018).
- PF: *In my view, the lack of political will and commitment to support school governing bodies is one big challenge. I feel the government is not giving adequate support to the SGBs. The provision of sufficient training is being overlooked, and there is evidence of untapped resources* (Senior teacher, 10 years' experience, interviewed on 20 September 2018).
- PSB 1: *The failure for a national platform, lack of time to participate and create self-confidence that propels the willingness to participate and show up is a major constraint. In short, it is an attitude* (Parent, interviewed 20 September 2018).

#### 5.4.8.1 The lack of positive attitudes for supporting school governing bodies

Another sub-category emerging from participants' responses is that South African principals, parents, teachers and learners lack the positive and appropriate attitudes that are required for collectively supporting the SGBs in their respective settings. Participants FG2, FG3, PA and PD argued that principals, teachers and parents

sometimes did not exhibit the needed positive attitudes required for supporting the SGBs and the related initiatives. The perception and behavioural challenges continue to affect the experiences of the SGBs, and consequently limit their effectiveness in a negative manner. A related theme is the lack of appropriate school governance literature and other crucial resources and infomercials to educate the relevant parties on the roles of the SGBs in South African schools. Most of the participants (PA, PC, PF & FG1–4) noted the lack or absence of suitable literature on the SGBs in the form of pamphlets and library materials that could be used to gain an in-depth knowledge on the roles and functions of the SGBs to make the subject common to the entire citizenry. Obviously, these participants would not have easy access to online resources due to lack of necessary technological tools.

Typical responses supporting the above findings are highlighted below:

- PA: *The issue of negative perceptions and attitudes has always been a limiting factor when it comes to the effectiveness of the SGBs* (School principal, 22 years' experience, interviewed on 25 September 2018).
- PD: *Generally, budgetary constraints have negatively impacted on the effectiveness of the SGBs, hence planned projects do not come to fruition* (School principal, 22 years' experience, interviewed on 27 September 2018).
- PB: *I think if more literature like fliers and pamphlets are regularly distributed with information on roles and functions, it would be easier for the public to understand and appreciate the existence of the SGBs, hence negative perceptions are reduced* (Senior teacher, 20 years' experience, interviewed on 27 September 2018).

## **5.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

In this section, the findings from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions are presented and analysed. Several themes and related sub-categories emerged from the data analysis that help in explaining why and how various stakeholders can be engaged in the SGBs' business to increase their competencies, performance and effectiveness in undertaking their mandate. Most of the participants indicated that the SGBs in the South African education sector are trying their best to execute their functions, despite the challenges they are facing. It is also noted that the

DBE supports the SGB programmes, although such support is being viewed differently in various schools, which suggests that there is a need for strategies to enhance the effectiveness of such support. Most participants proposed that the SGBs should be supported in order to improve their functionality and effectiveness in South African schools.

The findings further reveal that there was consensus among participants that the SGB structures should effectively benefit principals, parents, teachers and learners in South Africa. Participants' perspectives reveal that if the SGBs are to function effectively, they need to be supported by all the relevant stakeholders, and policy-makers should play a leading role in ensuring the design and promulgation of a relevant and supportive policy framework that is in line with the best practices.

Additionally, the findings reveal that all participants still regarded principals as the most critical aspect of policy implementation and, if equipped with the necessary skills, they would be able to implement the projects and programmes proposed by the SGB directives. Therefore, while there are several determining factors that participants felt could inhibit the SGBs' effectiveness in South Africa, participants believed that there were many opportunities for improving the SGBs' effectiveness and expanding their mandate to ensure that broader life skills and ethics are taught in schools. In addition, it emerged from participants' comments during the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions that the improvement of the SGBs in South African schools is necessary, and that for schools to successfully implement the SGB mandates, it would be prudent for the SGBs to engage with and consult the key stakeholders in the South African education sector. The next section presents the conclusion drawn from the entire chapter.

## **5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented, analysed, interpreted and discussed the findings and attempted to address the research problem and answer the research question raised in Chapter 1 of this thesis. In doing so, several themes and sub-categories emerged from the data analysis that assist in explaining the rationale for exploring the effectiveness of the SGBs in schools. A central and recurring theme surfacing from the data analysis is that the SGBs' structures have the mandate to increase the overall



quality of the teaching and learning processes in South African schools. However, the operations of the SGBs are negatively affected by various factors.

It is, therefore, necessary to acknowledge that the data gathered by using the mixed methods approach, including semi-structured interviews, the questionnaire method and focus group discussions, is useful as it enables the researcher to address the main research question and the sub-research questions. To this end, this study submits that based on the findings, a comprehensive and broader programme and best practice policy framework for the SGBs should be developed for South African schools. The study findings can be used as a basis for developing such a framework as the findings of this research provide answers to the key research questions, and thus, achieve the aims and objectives of the study. The next chapter provides a summary of the major findings from the study, conclusions and recommendations for the key stakeholders in South African schools and suggests areas for further study.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **PRESENTATION OF SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the findings from the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, and documentary analysis procedures. The findings were presented, analysed and interpreted in the context of the relevant theoretical framework. The findings emerged from semi-structured interviews with principals and senior teachers, chairpersons of the SGBs, Education Department officials, parents as the SGB members, and focus group interviews with school learners and the SGB members, respectively. Several themes and related sub-categories emerged from the data analysis that helped in explaining the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools.

#### **6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE METHOD**

Participants provided a wide range of views regarding the definition of the SGBs and their role. Topical in the definitional views was the fact that the SGBs are a statutory body, and represent the various stakeholders of a school in a regulatory role in South Africa. Participants expressed knowledge of South African laws and policies that support the establishment and existence of the SGBs. However, they also revealed that the strict implementation thereof, the enforcement of and compliance with the laws and policies was problematic.

##### **6.2.1 Complementary Structures**

The study revealed that there are several institutions that work to support the SGBs. In section 5.3.4.2, various institutions were identified as a key to influencing the effectiveness of South African schools by participating in the SGBs. Some participants were aware that there were other similar national structures in South Africa such as the School Governing Foundation, which complement the role and mandate of the SGBs. This was validated in the empirical study in section 5.3.4.1. It was noted that such complementing structures play a pivotal role in enhancing the effectiveness of the SGBs in South Africa.

### **6.2.2 Perceptions**

To that end, most participants showed an understanding of the mandated functions of the SGBs and the intended impact of the SGBs on learners' academic life. However, the study revealed that participants had varying personal reactions to the SGBs. Some cited the positive impact made on the quality of education, while the SGBs were criticised for having failed to cater for the needs and interests of learners in South African schools and thus, not improving academic performance in schools.

### **6.2.3 Experienced Problems**

The participants concurred in identifying the problems related to the SGBs. The lack of a shared vision regarding the role played by the SGBs was identified as a major problem. According to section 2.13, participants cited a myriad of challenges that have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the SGBs in South African schools. The findings in section 5.4.6 also support these observations. The need for transparency and accountability in all transactions by the SGBs was singled out as a critical factor. Regarding the constraints associated with the role and execution of the SGBs' mandate in schools, most participants indicated that there was only a very limited supportive environment. The SGBs also found it often difficult to establish suitable candidates for the SGB membership as these were voluntary, unpaid positions and many individuals – teachers as well as parents – felt meetings should be paid for. Underfunding of schools in general also led to problems regarding what the SGBs could propose as projects to achieve a better performance at the schools. Underfunding would be particularly relevant in historically disadvantaged schools. The lack of skills and knowledge of (less literate) the SGB members again will have an impact particularly in historically disadvantaged schools, where lack of confidence, lack of experience and lack of schooling all contribute to limited input into the SGBs' effective functioning or enhancement of the learners' academic performance. In such cases, even basic training would not suffice, as it would be difficult for many to master the legal and financial complexities. Often, even principals lack the basic financial management skills, having come through the ranks.

#### **6.2.4 Training**

Participants highlighted that there was the need to train key stakeholders to appreciate the role of the SGBs. This conclusion is consistent with key observations reflected in section 3.6.4 of this study, in which training was identified as being essential for effective school governance. The findings in section 5.3.2.2 indicated that 55.6% of the participants were willing to receive future training on school governance issues. There was a consensus that the course content for the training should focus on matters of school governance and basic management as core courses.

#### **6.2.5 Learner Courses**

In addition, participants suggested that schools and colleges should introduce courses for learners on the relevance of the SGBs, specifically on life skills such as ethics and integrity, and entrepreneurship. They also believed learners needed to be trained more on the important role of the SGBs, besides the perceived benefit of having parents serving on the SGB and thus supporting learners. Thus, matters regarding the training on issues related to the SGBs were identified as their key responsibilities.

#### **6.2.6 Government's Role**

The study revealed that government, through the relevant channels has played an instrumental role in enhancing the effectiveness of the SGBs. This was validated in the empirical study in section 5.3.5.1, where the views of participants corroborated that government plays a major role in promoting school governance ideals, through regulating as well as supporting the SGBs with further training programmes.

#### **6.2.7 Shortcomings at School Level**

Despite the intentions by government to find workable solutions for all schools through the establishment of the SGBs to enhance the academic performance at all schools and achieve transparent and accountable governance measures, participants cited many reasons why educational institutions still either fail to recognise the importance of the SGBs or do not adhere to the laws and policies. Chief among the reasons were negative attitudes, a lack of knowledge or skills among the SGB members, lacking support by the community, non-attendance at the SGB meetings, and a lack of

funding. Notwithstanding the constraints cited, the study established that the role of the SGBs in aiming to enhance the effectiveness of schools cannot be overstated.

### **6.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE SEMI-STRUCTURED AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

All participants indicated that the SGBs should play an important role in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. However, it was revealed that there are individuals who do not place much value on the SGBs' roles, and who believe that the South African schools' effectiveness will not be enhanced through the SGBs.

Sections 3.2.1.1 and 3.7.3 reflected that the SGBs were established to improve governance and academic achievement in South African schools. Furthermore, section 5.3.1.2 indicated that 61% of the participants supported the concept. It emerged from the study that the proposals for introducing training and staff development on the importance of the SGBs in South African schools were backed by participants.

Section 2.3 reflected that the SGBs are important structures in the South African education system and this was emphasised by participants in section 5.4.4. The participants' perspectives revealed that failure to promote or recognise role of the SGBs has detrimental effects on education. The findings also revealed that a collective engagement by all stakeholders will ensure that the SGBs are able to execute their mandate effectively. This implies that all relevant stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, school learners, policy-makers, parents, and education officials should be instrumental and assume positive or leadership roles (where applicable) in ensuring the design and implementation of an appropriate education system that supports and motivates the functions of the SGBs in South African schools.

In section 2.12, various stakeholders were identified as being key to influencing the effectiveness of South African schools by participating in the SGBs. The findings in section 5.3.3.2 also supported this observation. Additionally, parents were regarded by all participants as beacons in the functions of the SGBs whom, if capacitated with the necessary knowledge for promoting/supporting the role of the SGBs, would effectively add value to school governance matters within the schools and communities at large. Section 5.4.2 showed that parents have an important role in

assisting the functions of the SGBs. Unfortunately, parents coming from a disadvantaged background or a poorer socio-economic environment experience more challenges than do better educated and better-off parents, as they are less knowledgeable regarding financial matters, legal matters, the basics of management and meeting procedures. They will also find it more difficult to attend meetings (transport cost and access), and feel less confident in environments that are not part of their normal frame of reference.

While there were several constraints that participants felt could inhibit the role of the SGBs in South African schools, all participants were optimistic and positive that there were good opportunities and possibilities for promoting/supporting the SGBs, particularly through introducing periodic staff development and training for people to appreciate the role and importance of the SGBs in these schools. In addition, it was highly discernible from participants' comments during semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews that the effectiveness of schools in South Africa is dependent on the societal attitudes towards the role played by the SGBs. To that end, supporting the SGBs was imperative if schools wanted to improve their academic performance and effectiveness. For schools to successfully promote the effectiveness of the SGBs, it will be prudent to engage and consult with the critical stakeholders in the education system such as school principals, teachers, parents, school learners, policy-makers, and Education Department officials.

The findings confirm the key assumptions and observations of the functionalist theory explored in section 3.4.5.1 that critical stakeholders have to interact interdependently for the survival of the entire system.

The next section focuses on the presentation and analysis of findings from the documentary analysis of related policy and strategic documents for the selected South African schools where this study was conducted.

## **6.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS**

In this section, findings from the documentary analysis of the policies, Acts, vision and mission statements, and minutes of the SGBs meetings for the selected South African schools are presented, analysed and interpreted. The results of the documentary analysis corroborated well with the already discussed findings from the questionnaire,

semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions, reflecting that in South African schools, the SGBs play a pivotal role in the national educational goal of enhancing the schools' effectiveness in undertaking their mandates. However, there is lack of an educational training programme that is meant to equip stakeholders with the skills to run and manage the SGBs. Furthermore, there is no evidence of the mention of the term 'school governance training/education' in the ministerial vision and mission statements governing the operations of the selected South African schools where this study was conducted. Evidence from section 3.4.6.3 indicated that policy-makers are critical in setting the required tone through policy formulation and crafting the desired vision, mission and governing values. Reference to the term 'school governance training/education' was only evident and implicitly connected to the aims of the policies that were reviewed.

Two of the ten sets of the SGB minutes for their annual general meetings held, which were analysed, revealed some elements of school governance discourse as well as the importance of the SGBs. However, it is vital to note that the school governance themes were reflected implicitly and explicitly in the Standard Procedure Manuals for the schools studied. In dealing with education on the importance of the SGBs, many relevant approaches were suggested. It had been argued that school governance initiatives in all schools must be broad-based and all-encompassing to incorporate aspects of school administration and management among critical stakeholders (Mafumo, 2010:123).

The documentary analysis further explored the area of general school management and administration, with a review of key strategies that are employed by parents, teachers, and school principals in South African schools. Findings from the documentary analysis revealed that despite the culture of setting or establishing the SGBs in South African schools, there was no explicit literatures or manuals available that were specific to educate key stakeholders on the functioning of the SGBs. According to the findings in sections 3.4 and 3.5.3, school governance education is imperative for building internal capacities that support the roles of the SGBs.

Based on the findings from the documentary analysis, it was established that the recommended strategies to promote a knowledge base on the SGB matters are the collective development of relevant literature, including drafting of standard procedure

manuals for use by key stakeholders when handling issues pertaining to the SGBs in schools. Therefore, the major findings from the documentary analysis of the crucial selected documents including policies, Acts, minutes, vision and mission statements assisted the researcher in developing an informed insight into key issues surrounding the role of the SGBs in South African schools. According to section 4.9 documents are regarded as an important source of qualitative empirical evidence.

This section has presented and analysed the findings from the documentary analysis of the relevant policy and strategic documents for the selected South African Schools. The next section presents the summary of key findings based on the research questions that guided the entire study. The key findings from the questionnaire method, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary analysis procedures will be discussed in the following section, with a view to answering the research questions and address the aims and objectives of the current research study.

## **6.5 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS RELATING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In this section, key findings from this study are summarised. Findings are presented according to the research question that guided this study. The main research question was: *What is the role of school governing bodies in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools?*

### **6.5.1 Key Findings from the Major Research Question**

The questionnaire was administered to participants. In addition, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with participants to find answers to the major research question. To complement and augment the research, relevant documents were also reviewed, considering the major research question. The following is a summary of the key findings from the main research question.

#### **6.5.1.1 SGBs promote teaching and learning processes through collaborative engagements**

The results in section 5.3.4.2 indicated that most participants agreed that effective support mechanisms are required to support the SGBs. This is consistent with section



5.3.3.2, where it was revealed that collaborative engagements are pivotal. Findings pertaining to the main research question underscored the need for the SGBs promoting and supporting teaching and learning processes in South African Schools in answer to their mandate to enhance academic performance in South African schools and achieve positive governance measures. This function reflects the existential need for schools to bring principals, teachers, parents, and learners onto the same platform to discuss ways of managing schools collectively. Participants in the present research suggested a variety of ways in which the role of the SGBs can be improved through collaboration. Chief among them is the adoption of contemporary teaching and learning strategies that can promote a quality education system in South African schools. In section 5.3.1.4, the participants emphasised the importance of promoting quality education in schools. Thus, in this case the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness should be evident. The teaching and learning environments can only become conducive if all key stakeholders share a common vision for such school. Thus, the SGBs can provide an ideal forum for exchanging ideas for continuous development and growth.

The study findings suggested that the concept of the SGBs in schools was associated with potential positive benefits that could enhance effective teaching and learning. Participants felt that the SGBs would help in developing the school environment, which again calls for a multi-stakeholder response. Findings from the study showed that it will not be possible to attain conducive teaching and learning environments without the shared vision and support of the SGBs.

#### 6.5.1.2 The SGBs should perform regulatory and advisory role

Section 2.6 showed that in South Africa, the regulatory frameworks for the SGBs are provided for in the context of the SASA legislation. Many of the participants were of the view that all related policies and Acts that are associated with the SGBs should clearly spell out the rationale for the SGBs in schools, where the SGBs should perform an advisory role as their core function. It was suggested that this would strengthen the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. In addition, key functions of the SGBs suggested by participants were that the SGBs should be playing an oversight function, ensuring that school business was conducted in a transparent manner to promote accountability, and to instil a culture of

responsibility and ownership in applying resources in a transparent and accountable manner, including the maintenance of infrastructure. There was a symbiotic link between oversight roles that participants considered to be pivotal aspects for supporting the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. It can therefore be argued that the oversight roles suggested by the study participants can be the basis for designing an appropriate education system that recognises the continued importance of the SGBs for South African schools. The superseding theme associated with this question was that the possibilities for strengthening the oversight roles of the SGBs in South African schools are vast and should be capitalised on. However, findings from this study also showed that additional roles need to be considered to improve the effectiveness of the SGBs in South African schools.

Evidence from this study further validated the fact that the SGBs in South African schools have a fundamental role of regulating the day-to-day operations of schools. Thus, this makes the SGBs strategically positioned to ensure that there is no wastage of resources, including financial matters and other related school governance initiatives.

It became apparent that South African teachers need additional training and a formal preparation in financial management and administration to assist in effective administration of schools if they are to take on senior roles or be part of the SGBs. Findings from this study also revealed the urgent need to develop the capacities and competencies of all stakeholders in instituting mechanisms that can effectively curb social ills such as corruption, embezzlement, and fraud in school transactions. The empirical findings in section 5.4.5 indicated that the participants understood that the SGBs are mandated to promote and enhance good corporate governance in schools. It was clear from the data analysis that through the SGBs, South African school principals would require thorough in-service training on anti-corruption matters, financial management, and accounting to provide them with the necessary skills to lead the school in the new democratic environment. Additionally, other stakeholders would need to be exposed to comprehensive training and capacity building to gain knowledge and skills in school administration/management and the importance of the SGBs (Tsoetsi et al., 2008:395).

The collective formulation of a school governance policy requires the engagement and support of the relevant stakeholders. Study participants had reservations on the effectiveness of the existing policy framework, not so much regarding its purpose or structure, but the fact that between the Act and the policies, interpretations were left open to the various schools, and strict adherence and implementation were not always achieved. It was highlighted that a review of the current policies in comparison to the Act is imperative to strengthen the SGBs' advisory and regulatory role.

Therefore, it can be concluded that for the SGBs to effectively play their oversight role, there is a need to develop a sense of collective engagement and ownership among all concerned stakeholders. The school is for the community and the community is for the school (Musaazi, 2016:21).

There was a consensus among participants that the SGBs in South African schools should ensure that they effectively perform their oversight and advisory roles. All key stakeholders must have the appropriate school governance knowledge and skills, and should possess the appropriate positive attitude, abiding by the values that will enable them to build and sustain their schools. As reflected in section 3.4.1.1, the general perception suggest that good governance, exhibited by transparency, accountability, honesty and ethical behaviour, is at the core of effective school management. Good governance is at the heart of every institution, and all efforts to promote sustainable teaching and learning processes, and this is dependent on the creation of corruption-free school environments by responsible authorities (Transparency International, 2016:15).

### **6.5.2 Findings pertaining to Sub-Question 1**

**Sub-question 1** was: In what ways do the school governing bodies in different school contexts strive to improve academic excellence in South African schools?

Section 5.4.1 discussed key and multiple benefits of the SGBs. The findings pertaining to sub-question one revealed that there are several ways in which the SGBs in different school contexts strive to improve academic excellence in South African schools. For example, it was revealed that the SGBs promote quality education, principles of achievement on merit, rewarding underprivileged learners by supporting the fair grading of learners, and thereby promoting the learners' access to better education.

These ways are pertinent to the South African schools' context as they all focus on the contextual ways in which learners' academic excellence can be improved by the SGBs in the contemporary South Africa. Literature on the education system in South African schools recognises the role of the SGBs in schools and shows that some of the ways in which the SGBs can promote academic excellence include the inculcation of a shared vision and goals. In addition, a platform for democratic governance through active participation by key stakeholders is promoted. Fair competition is guaranteed through adherence to a regulating policy framework, whereby limiting factors such as monopolistic application of resources is discouraged. The school governing bodies/school development committees in African nations have been credited for promoting learners' academic excellence in schools because they play an oversight role in all day-to-day operations at school level with a positive view of achieving organisational goals (Musonza, 2015:23).

The findings pertaining to sub-question one illustrated that the SGBs in different school contexts strive to improve academic excellence in South African schools also through building trust and confidence in the school governance processes. It is important to note that South African school documents examined and the responses from various study participants showed that the SGBs' roles and their mandate aim at introducing specific strategies for school management. These include exposing teachers and principals to principles of good corporate governance, responsibility, transparency and accountability. This exposure has a positive impact on improving the provision of quality education, hence the consequential positive effect on learners' performance.

Evidence from the documentary analysis revealed that the SGBs in their day-to-day oversight roles aim at upholding ethics and integrity in the running of schools, while insisting on results-based performance. Evidence from section 5.4.4 corroborated with the statement that ethics and integrity are very important, not only for the SGB members, but also for all stakeholders.

The study findings revealed that there are several ways in which the SGBs in different school contexts strive to improve academic excellence in South African schools. It is therefore imperative to develop a culture of positive school governance in schools through undertaking public/community education on the importance of the SGBs. Participants' perspectives cited the need to involve community leaders in this public

education drive to ensure that citizens appreciate the role of the SGBs in developing learners' excellence. It is significant for public education to raise awareness on the importance of the SGBs to be administered in South African communities based on principles of transparency and accountability in school governance matters. It is the contention of the researcher that the lack of a shared vision regarding school governance education may generate negative effects on the development of academic excellence in South African schools. Sections 2.5.1 and 3.2.1.2 highlighted the importance of transparency and accountability when running the affairs of the SGBs.

The findings from the literature review demonstrated the existence of factors such as lack of integrity among key stakeholders in school governance, which have a detrimental effect when it comes to pursuing efforts on improving academic excellence in schools (Transparency International, 2016:13).

The current findings corroborated the findings of a related study conducted in Zimbabwe by Mavhunga (2017:3), which identified school development committees and associations as beacons for the improvement of academic excellence in schools through their statutory mandates of playing an oversight role in school management and administration. However, the current study contradicted the research evidence by Magidi (2013:6), in which it emerged that the SGBs were concentrating only on infrastructural development in schools as opposed to targeting the goals meant for improvement of academic excellence. The current existing literature may seem to be silent on the specifics relating to factors that cause the SGBs' failure to promote or recognise the need to uphold principles of academic excellence in schools, since more emphasis was placed on infrastructure development dimensions. Based on the foregoing, these findings may seem to aid and validate the current research literature, particularly on key issues that constrain the SGBs' efforts to improve academic excellence in South African schools.

### **6.5.3 Findings pertaining to Sub-Question 2**

**Sub-question 2** was: What are the contributing factors that still condone disparities among the school governing bodies in South Africa?

As has already been alluded to in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the overall aim of this research study was to explore how the role of the SGBs would enhance

school effectiveness in South African schools. In the researcher's view, the role of the SGBs is largely constrained by political, social and economic challenges which, if not addressed, could affect the performance of South African schools. This will in turn have a ripple effect on the quality of teaching and learning processes and the final academic performance of South African schools. Findings from this study demonstrated that the SGBs in South African schools are currently facing a myriad of constraints. Accordingly, the major challenge related to the SGBs lies in the absence of political will as reflected by participants, regarding adequate funding for infrastructure of schools, learning material, and funding for the SGB projects. As reflected in section 5.4.6, the participants cited a need for political will and commitment to support the SGBs in order to eradicate the factors that impact negatively on the effectiveness of the SGBs and thus the schools and their learners.

In addition, not having a shared vision across all the SGBs (and thus unequal implementation of the regulations) was singled out as a major constraint, which has a direct impact on attitudes and perceptions surrounding the concept of the SGBs and their mandate or role. Negative attitudes were cited as a major constraint, leading to a lack of public support for the role of the SGBs in South African schools. This observation was consistent with the key findings in section 5.4.6 of the study, in which negative perceptions were identified as the impediments to effective school governance. Some sections of society may fail to collectively engage in the collaborative engagements which are spearheaded at school level by the SGBs; hence, this factor still results in disparities across the SGBs in South Africa. Economic challenges are also a prime factor in that the DBE in South Africa so far has been unable to provide the enabling resources to the schools and their SGB structures, in this case particularly problematic for historically disadvantaged schools, schools in rural areas and those in informal settlements. Unfortunately, also, because of a lack of support from the public for these schools, their infrastructure and the role of the SGBs, key stakeholders do not play a prominent enough role regarding the safety and maintenance of these schools or an enhancement of their infrastructure.

These challenges obviously dictate the level of effectiveness of the schools and their SGBs in South African schools and can derail the much-needed developmental initiatives meant to promote an effective sustainable learning environment with

optimised outcomes. For instance, in the literature review chapter of this thesis, it was emphasised that instead of promoting/supporting the effectiveness of the SGBs, some sections of society are perceiving the SGBs as a way of duplicating the intended functions of principals or teachers, thus making it difficult to convince citizens of the need to empower the SGBs.

Therefore, challenges affecting the successful operations of the SGBs need to be addressed to create conducive teaching and learning environments in South African schools. Transparency International (2016:10) notes that the major challenge in schools is a governance crisis, caused by a failure to recognise and adhere to standard operating procedures, and the utility role of structures such as the SGBs. As such, set standards and the strategic vision of schools will be at stake if they are not adhered to in practice. This was validated in sections 2.9 and section 5.4.5, where participants agreed that strategic planning by schools is important to realise the benefits from the roles of the SGBs. However, some negative perceptions have become accepted as part of the school and community culture as reflected in and identified by the findings of the study. The institutionalisation of the 'wrong' perceptions thus contributes to the failure to recognise the role of the SGBs, and the SGBs in turn not playing a more active role. Therefore, the study findings point to the failure by relevant stakeholders to create shared views and a belief system within the schools and their communities of supporting the SGBs. The incapacitation of school governance bodies has been cited by the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (2017:10) as a major cause of failing schools. The UNDP (2011:9) acknowledges that the challenges associated with school governance initiatives are precipitated by citizens' perceptions. In South Africa, the educational system within some South African schools seems to have weakened to the extent of the school and the community working against the role of the SGBs. Non-compliance by the schools with the SASA or the policies and their regulations/standards has also become a major factor in some schools, be it based on ignorance/lack of fully understanding the implications or a wilful disregard for such rules and regulations: the failure by the public officials to undertake their duties (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2012:15) and monitor strict implementation results in poorly performing schools, robbing the learners of opportunities in life.

Generally, the South African South schools' curriculum is expected to include education on the importance of the SGBs, including the general functions and operational aspects. Through the creation of awareness of why governance is essential at schools, citizens, other stakeholders, teachers and learners can also be appraised of their contributions and role in the broader school governance value chain. In this respect, relevant stakeholders will realise that the effectiveness of the SGBs is a shared enterprise, hence everyone has to be empowered to account for their actions for the betterment of the operations of the SGBs in South African schools. This confirms observations by Haralambos and Holborn (2012:14) regarding the functionalist theory that the need for interdependence among institutions of society is an imperative, if society is to achieve and meet goals associated with value consensus.

The following is a summary of the key findings from sub-question two:

#### 6.5.3.1 Attitudinal and perception problems

Evidence in section 2.13 and section 5.4.2 indicated that a shared vision is central to reducing perception problems. The study revealed that the role of SGBs in enhancing the effectiveness of South African schools is constrained by the perceived lack of a shared vision among relevant stakeholders, citizens, teachers, learners, principals, and parents of some schools. It was also believed that there seemed to be a perceived absence of political commitment to truly empower and recognise the role of the SGBs.

In some schools, criticising or ignoring the role and existence of the SGBs has become a culture to the extent of 'becoming traditional structures', and to that effect modifying perceptions and attitudes is becoming a problem. From the data presented in response to interviews, it was found that parents and teachers were showing a lack of knowledge regarding the statutory requirements related to school governance and issues related to day-to-day expectations of the SGBs. According to section 5.4.6, principals and teachers were regarded as fountains of knowledge; thus, the finding indicates that reality contradicts the participants' expectations regarding the knowledge regarding the SASA and policies.

It was noted that parents, teachers, and other relevant stakeholders were often not fully and directly involved in the SGBs' operations. Since academic achievement of



learners should also be a reflection of the quality of the SGBs, it is imperative for teachers and parents to be involved in the collective engagements with the SGBs. The study revealed that continuous capacity building and training are required for all relevant stakeholders to equip them with skills to effectively deal with, or serve in the SGBs to promote sustainable effectiveness of schools.

#### 6.5.3.2 The absence of a concerted effort in supporting the role of the SGBs in schools

Findings from the literature review and participants' perspectives revealed that there is an absence of combined efforts in promoting or recognising the role of the SGBs in enhancing effectiveness of South African schools. When the school principals and senior teachers were asked to describe the situation of school governance in public schools, they confirmed that there is little collective engagement in pursuing workshops whose aims are to educate on the importance of the SGBs in South Africa. This conclusion is consistent with the key findings in section 5.3.2.1, wherein the participants cited a lack of collective consensus. The participants' views demonstrated that the growing lack of combined efforts resulted in communities and other stakeholders actually undermining the potential capacity of the SGBs in influencing the effectiveness of South African schools. For example, participants PB and PA cited the lack of coordination between the SGB members and the local leadership in the community as well as the perceived discord in the relationship of some principals and the SGB members.

Therefore, participants affirmed findings from the literature review that there is an absence of a collective positive spirit towards supporting or recognising the role of SGBs in enhancing the effectiveness of South African schools. The perceived lack of a shared vision in pursuing school governance initiatives in South African schools is considered another problem that triggered the current research study. A robust, strengthened and collective school governance drive is required in South African schools to establish sustainable school management ideals (SASA, 1996:2).

As highlighted in the preceding chapters, the collective efforts to reassess and then promote the role of the SGBs in South African schools is considered to be an effective and pivotal strategy to lead to sustainable academic achievement (see Chapter 2 dealing with the literature review).

#### 6.5.3.3 South African schools are not offering workshop training on the importance of the SGBs

One of the key findings associated with this research sub-question was that South African schools are not offering regular workshops or courses on the functions, importance and effective management of the SGBs. Participants believed that the issues of school governance were overlooked across schools, and this undermines the role of the SGBs as well as the proper functioning of the schools in question. Evidence from the documentary analysis for the selected/sample schools involved in this research corroborated the fact that there was no periodic training offered regarding on the role, functions, importance or the management of the SGBs in these schools.

The phrase 'school governance education' is not mentioned in the South African school documents examined for the purposes of the current research study. This suggests that the South African education sector is failing to play an instrumental role in undertaking staff development initiatives on school governance capacity building. This was validated in section 5.3.2.2, where participants agreed that lack of staff development initiatives can constrain the effectiveness the SGBs in performing their statutory functions. The need to introduce an ethical education that focuses on aspects of school governance cannot be overstated, as it assists relevant stakeholders in developing positive school governance attitudes (Hallak & Poisson, 2016:12).

It was interesting to note that even though awareness creation and education on the role of the SGBs is not obtainable as a formal programme in the South African school curricula, participants felt that its proposition would benefit South African schools. Participants perceived awareness creation and education on governance and associated values through workshops and seminars on the role of the SGBs as a critical tool for invigorating sustainable teaching and learning processes in South African schools.

Participants associated and likened awareness creation and education on the importance of the role of the SGBs with the term 'school governance education' and anticipated a situation in which all relevant stakeholders should collaborate. Therefore, as emphasised throughout this thesis, awareness creation and education on the importance of the role of the SGBs should be proposed in South African schools to

assist in growing a shared positive school governance disposition in South Africa. South African school principals, teachers, learners, relevant stakeholders, and parents can play a crucial role in developing an ethos of collaboration, a shared positive vision regarding the role of the SGBs in achieving academic excellence together with the other important stakeholders in education.

The current findings corroborate findings of a related study by Chikoko (2015:27) on challenges/constraints associated with the role of the SGBs in Zimbabwean schools, in which it was found that a lack of a formal education on school governance was singled out to be the major limiting factor. The current study also found, but less so than the research evidence by Transparency International (2016:16), that the perceived lack of political will and commitment to empower the SGBs was the main constraint affecting schools in Africa. The existing literature seems to be silent on the specifics relating to the strategies for enhancing the effective operation of the SGBs to improve the execution of their statutory mandate. Therefore, the current findings may augment the existing literature, particularly on providing a comprehensive perspective in the analysis of constraints negatively impacting on the role of the SGBs in South African schools.

Findings from this research illustrated that supporting the role of the SGBs has been associated with some positive benefits in South African schools, although many the SGBs obviously had not been able to be fully functional because of the various constraints. It is argued that through an effective support for the role of the SGBs, enabling attitudes linked to positive governance and geared towards the effectiveness of schools can be generated. For instance, some of the participants (PD, PE & PF) in the study confirmed that supporting the role of the SGBs has strengthened the transparency and accountability within their schools' environments. In addition, this has further developed a positive sense of cooperation among the relevant stakeholders towards the attainment of universally accepted educational outputs and deliverables. Findings from this study provided convincing evidence that supporting the role of the SGBs is a precondition if South African schools are to achieve the fundamentals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### **6.5.4 Findings pertaining to Sub-Question 3**

**Sub-question 3** was: How can the Department of Basic Education further equip the school governing bodies in performing their governing role effectively?

This was validated in section 5.3.3.1, where the instrumental role of the Department of Basic Education was outlined. Findings from this research illustrated that there are various ways in which the DBE can equip the SGBs in performing their governing role more effectively in South African schools.

Findings from this study provided persuasive evidence that there are some potential strategies that can be adopted by the DBE to further equip the SGBs in performing their governing role more effectively in South African schools. To this effect, the strategies should be explored by keeping in mind that the strategies should lead to the final outcome of increased quality of education in schools. Thus, poor corporate governance practices in South African schools should be regarded as pathological considering the cases in the public domain associated with the ineffective role of the SGBs. It would therefore be prudent to reassess and re-install the SGB member training on legislation governing the operations of the SGBs. This strategy, according to the findings, will also result in enhancing the awareness of statutory provisions regulating the SGBs in South African schools as a strategy to promote their effectiveness.

In a study by the World Bank (2010:18), it was found that training, and exchange programmes were key strategies that can be adopted to increase awareness and empower citizens and stakeholders to recognise the role of the SGBs, and equip them in performing their governing role more effectively. In this study, continuous staff development, including workshops and symposia, were identified as pivotal strategies towards enhancing the quality of education.

A key finding from sub-question three was that equipping the SGBs in performing their governing role effectively in South African schools remains the ultimate solution to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals linked to the provision of education. Section 5.4.3 reflects that there is a need to build internal capacities at schools to strengthen the SGBs.

Participants highlighted that the absence or near absence of relevant education and training on school governance policies has given rise to the administrative problems experienced in the day-to-day running of South African schools. Study participants stressed that not prioritising strategies for equipping the SGBs in performing their governing role effectively manifested itself in gross mismanagement of schools, a practice that violates the aim of effective provision of quality education.

Participants generally concurred that failure to bring parents, principals, and teachers to the same platform during relevant training to sensitise them on the role of the SGBs and governance issues becomes a major hurdle to the ultimate aim of achieving excellence. It was noted that there is a need to bring these key stakeholders together and expose them to school governance matters, including procurement and tendering processes. It was further noted that in some schools, a lot of transactions are concealed, which reflects badly on the quality of the SGBs and ultimately, the school and its principal. Central to this were sentiments by participants that “corruptive practices in South African schools are rife”. According to the World Bank Group (2012:2), “the misappropriation of public office for private consumption” has been a major problem negatively affecting public entities. On the part of the SGBs, it was established that office bearers may abuse their official power and cause schools to be ineffective. This, according to findings, may lead to the deterioration of standards in schools.

The current findings corroborated the findings of related studies by the Government of India (2015:13), where it was found that the role of the SGBs in public schools is affected by the nature and character of the office bearers who may engage in various forms of corruption.

However, evidence by Transparency International (2016:33), stating that the manifestation of corrupt practices in the education sector were reliant on the level of socio-economic and political development of the nation in question, were not corroborated in the current study and participants did not suggest that poverty or political instability had a role to play in the level of corruption in schools.

The existing literature seems to be silent on the specifics relating to the nature of school governance dynamics of the SGBs in South African private schools to offer a

plausible contrast with public schools. Based on the foregoing, these findings may seem to complement the current research literature, particularly on providing a knowledgeable decision regarding ways to be adopted to equip the SGBs in performing their governing role more effectively in South African schools. However, indications are that private schools will have better qualified/skilled SGB members serving their schools, probably be able to call on legal and financial experts and those with management skills and experience. They also be able to allocate funds for calling in or appointing such experts. Historically disadvantaged schools will not be able to call on such experts, except if they set up contacts with pro bono services or mentors.

#### **6.5.5 Findings pertaining to Sub-Question 4**

**Sub-question 4** was: What strategies are adopted by the SGBs to enhance effective school governance and the management of resources to improve learner achievement in historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa?

It is evident from section 3.4.3.2 that multiple strategies are required to support the SGBs in the execution of their mandate. The strategies to be employed in supporting the role of the SGBs in South African schools were explored, based on participants' recommendations and the prevailing socio-economic and political-governance conditions in South Africa. Participants in this study were school principals, parents, teachers, and school learners. During the semi-structured interviews with principals, teachers, parents, and the focus group interviews with school learners, participants suggested a variety of strategies that can be used to enhance effective school governance and management of resources to improve learner achievement in historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa.

Principally, it was established that it was necessary to make the relevant public aware of the SGBs and their role and to communicate their importance in the drive to improve the quality of education at these schools. The following strategies for improving the role of the SGBs were suggested by participants:

- There is a need to engage in training campaigns and workshops with relevant stakeholders, including all the schools' principals, parents, teachers, the government, and the public and private sector to have an understanding of the role and functions of the SGBs.

- The SGB members will have to become role models, and be exemplary in their conduct to provide the school community with unquestionable school governance ideals. Corruption, nepotism, any illegal activities or misconduct must never be associated (or committed by) with an SGB member. For that purpose, they must personally sign a Code of Conduct that spells out the conduct they will adhere to.
- There is a need for government to mobilise resources especially for historically disadvantaged schools, rural schools and schools in informal settlements/poor areas to assist those schools to be able to develop appropriate teaching and learning environments, together with the efforts of the relevant SGBs.
- There is a need to prepare teachers through pre-service and in-service training to make them more effective in handling school governance education.

It will be important to develop and then incorporate these strategies in all the efforts to promote the role of the SGBs in enhancing the effectiveness of South African schools. For instance, a theme on school governance in education needs to be incorporated as a compulsory and mandatory course for all the parents who assume roles as office bearers in the SGB structures. It follows that there is a need to use education as a way of disseminating the critical aspects related to the role of the SGBs.

However, what was missing from participants' proposed strategies were the other key strategies related to the specific tasks the Department of Education in South Africa should undertake to bring all stakeholders onto the same platform. Apart from the foregoing, findings from this research study demonstrated that the rigorous collaborative engagement with all relevant stakeholders in the school governance value chain is critical and inevitable, if the present South African schools are to be effective in providing quality education.

According to the findings from this research study, the DoE in South Africa is very important in spearheading initiatives that strengthen the effectiveness of the SGBs. The South African Government (2017:12) maintains that all national educational initiatives and innovations require the support, endorsement and approval of and by the government. In addition, the Minister of the Department is held accountable for all the statutory provisions associated with the establishment of the SGBs. Therefore, in the case of South Africa, the Minister for the Department of Education has the prerogative of spearheading the legislative changes on the SGBs' laws/statutes and

policies to achieve effective governance at all schools. Thus, in South Africa it is vital to engage the policy-makers so that they will develop the policies that will facilitate the effective operation of the SGBs in schools. Together with the appropriate policies and laws, there has to be a clear policy on how the implementation of the regulations and policies/laws will be monitored and what measurements will be taken by whom if they are not implemented.

#### **6.5.6 Findings pertaining to Sub-Question 5**

**Sub-question 5** was: Why is it important for the SGBs to adopt policies that will later translate into the implementation of good corporate governance in South African schools?

According to section 5.3.5.2, policy formulation and implementation assist the SGBs in promoting and enhancing the effectiveness of schools. Findings from this research illustrated that there are several reasons why the SGBs should adopt policies that will later translate into the implementation of good corporate governance in South African schools. For instance, some of the participants (PA, PB, and PC) in the study confirmed that failure to adopt supportive policies that recognise the role of the SGBs has hindered effectiveness in many schools and led to poor control regarding quality education. Moreover, findings from this study provided convincing evidence on the rationale behind the adoption by the SGBs of policies that should translate into good corporate governance in South African schools.

The following is a summary of the key findings from sub-question five:

##### **6.5.6.1 Promoting learner academic achievement and quality of education in schools**

Findings from this research indicated that it is very important for the SGBs to adopt and implement all policies that will translate into good corporate governance in South African schools. Corporate governance entails the commitment to openness, honesty and transparency, and the willingness to adhere to a written and an unwritten Code of Ethics and moral values, with every decision guided by independence, accountability and fairness (Skyways, 2019:2). Findings pointed to the fact that the SGBs are constrained by communities', parents', teachers' and principals' failure 'to commit' and the spirit of 'unwillingness' to adhere to the laid down laws and policies. This is



probably the case as non-implementation or non-adherence to the rules, laws and policies so far has no punitive element attached to it. For every law or policy, there has to be someone to monitor adherence to it and there must be visible consequences to non-adherence.

Semi-structured interviews with principals, parents, and teachers demonstrated that the adoption of sound policies is critical in that they promote sustainable academic achievement in schools. Thus, the failure by the SGBs and schools to adopt and help implement these policies is a cause for concern. Good corporate governance starts at the source as, according to Scanlon (2019:3), “you cannot manage what you cannot measure.”

The schools with the incompetent SGBs continue to experience problems regarding issues of setting standards for academic attainment. The teaching and learning environments of learners have been stifled by the absence or near absence of supportive structures; and hence, the result is having a negative effect on sustainable academic achievement of the learners at these schools. Section 2.13 showed that the participants were concerned with the fragmented approach displayed by the stakeholders in dealing with the SGBs’ issues.

Various participants (PA, PB, PC, and PM) revealed that there is a need for the SGBs to adopt and implement all relevant policies that translate into the implementation of good corporate governance in schools, and in turn, promote the effectiveness of the SGBs in education.

A survey by the World Bank (2010:15) in Vietnam reveals the strong correlation between the existence of a robust policy and the enhancement of good corporate governance in schools. Participants and service users stated that issues of poor corporate governance negatively affect public university and college education. A related Vietnamese survey by Transparency International (TI) (2016:38) also finds that 49% of participants perceive their education sector to be corrupt or highly corrupt. Thus, the SGBs’ failure to adopt policies that translate into the implementation of good corporate governance in schools has detrimental effects on the schools and thus on the education of learners. As Skyways (2019:12) claims, “A business is only as good as its reputation” This implies that once the SGBs adopt sound policies that can

translate into effective implementation, the quality of education in schools is also enhanced and academic achievement is positively enhanced. Evidence from section 5.4.5 validated the notion that the reputation of a school can be improved by the quality of the SGBs.

It follows that to enhance the effectiveness of the SGBs, there is a need to introduce critical interventions, including the comprehensive adoption and monitored implementation of policies that promote good corporate governance. Additionally, there is a need to lay strong foundations for “zero tolerance to malpractices. Poor governance practices continue to harm the public sector institutions, and one has to understand the issues here, so they are not repeated” (Natesan, 2019:2). Such attitudes will help bring positive change towards the achievement of sustainable academic outcomes. Teachers play a crucial role as both instructors and role models in instilling in learners the significance of integrity (Vittal, 2013:3). Furthermore, the essential first step to ensure good corporate governance is to instil leadership that is both effective and ethical (Natesan, 2019:2). Thus, principals are regarded as ideal pillars for visibly instituting good corporate governance in schools. This presupposes that principals are familiar with, understand and are willing and able to implement all relevant laws and policies.

Study participants maintained that the quality of education is heavily compromised in instances where the SGBs fail to adopt the policies of good corporate governance in South African schools. Evidence from around the globe asserts that poor corporate governance has bred corruption, which affects the poor disproportionately, reduces social services, hinders socio-economic development, and diverts investment in infrastructure, institutions and social services (UNDP, 2011:13; Transparency International, 2016:34; ZACC, 2017:10).

#### 6.5.6.2 Promoting the learners’ morale and motivation

The findings in section 5.4.6 confirmed that learners’ morale and motivation can be increased by the initiatives put in place in the schools by the SGBs’ structures. One of the key findings associated with sub-research question five was that the SGBs’ adoption of user-friendly policies had the potential and capacity to motivate learners and increase their overall intrinsic morale and motivation to perform better. All

participants were definite that when learners discover that the environment is supporting their well-being at school, they will eventually get motivated and their learning will be supported. Study participants highlighted that the adoption of effective policies will support learners' morale and motivation to learn.

Evidence from the group interviews conducted with learners from the selected South African schools involved in this research supported the attitude that the SGBs need to implement good corporate governance policies, which they believe will provide them with the opportunity to obtain quality education and a better chance for their future lives. This suggests that South African schools have a central role to play in ensuring that the policies and laws that are promulgated will be adopted and implemented to truly translate into good corporate governance, which will safeguard the basic rights of learners to a quality education.

## **6.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the study findings were presented and discussed, guided by the key research question raised in Chapter 1 of this thesis. The findings were mainly based on data that were obtained by using the interview method, focus group discussions, documentary analysis procedures and the questionnaire method. The chapter related the findings to the relevant theoretical framework that informed the entire study. A central and recurring theme surfacing from the findings was that school governance education (focusing on the functions, requirements, and role of the SGBs) is a necessity for all relevant stakeholders in South African schools. It was interesting to note from the findings that many participants were ignorant of the basic legislation that governs the operations of the SGBs.

Thus, the findings suggested that relevant stakeholders, including parents, principals, teachers, and other stakeholders, including the members serving in the SGBs, are not adequately trained or prepared to actively enhance the effectiveness of the SGBs. A related theme emerging from the findings was that the SGBs were regarded by participants as structures that are created for window-dressing purposes.

The findings suggested the need to design and adopt appropriate strategies for the enhancement of the role of the SGBs, which has to include a multi-stakeholder engagement. Furthermore, the findings suggested the need for intensive training of all

stakeholders regarding the requirements of serving on the SGBs. It also indicated that principals and teachers also need additional training/upskilling regarding financial management, governance and ethics.

The study also highlighted that failure to recognise the importance of the SGBs' role and mandate has a negative effect on the quality of education of learners. The current findings corroborate findings of a related study by ZACC (2017:14) on the impact of school governance structures on learners' academic achievement in public schools, in which it was found that the quality of the SGBs is at the core of promoting sustainable learner academic achievement. The literature may seem to be silent on the specifics relating to the extent to which the role of the SGBs can influence the disparities associated with historically disadvantaged learners in South Africa. However, in this study, it was shown that functioning and supported the SGBs will improve the quality of education in historically disadvantaged schools. Unfortunately, the necessary support for the SGBs in those schools seems to be lacking, as seems to be the necessary skills base regarding the composition of these SGBs.

Based on the foregoing, these findings complemented the existing literature, particularly on providing a comprehensive understanding of all the spheres of quality learner academic development that are negatively affected by a failure to enhance the functions of the SGBs. The study findings suggested that the role of the SGBs in enhancing the effectiveness of schools was influenced by the lack of a shared vision and negative perceptions, particularly in historically disadvantaged communities. There was consensus emerging from the findings suggesting that the empowerment of the SGBs through careful selection of the members and intense training to enable these members and imperative to strengthen their capacities to deal with school governance matters.

Based on the findings, it is vital to acknowledge that there are major factors that must be taken into account when considering the role of the SGBs in South African schools. There is also an urgency for the DoE to devise strategies for enhancing the SGBs' role and functions by monitoring their performance, particularly in schools where academic performance was below par, in an effort to assess their governance practices and adherence to the rules of the Act and the policies.

In the next chapter, the conclusions are drawn from the research findings and recommendations are proposed on how to improve the role of the SGBs in governing schools in South Africa. The recommendations are expected to inform various stakeholders, including the DoE in South Africa, principals, teachers, and parents. It is assumed that the recommendations would enhance their capabilities in the effective administration of schools, while recognising the important role of the SGBs in enhancing effectiveness of schools in general through the strict implementation of all rules and regulations, monitoring the improvements to the schools' infrastructure and academically enabling environment through the appropriate allocation of resources.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations for the Department of Education, and school principals, parents, teachers, and school learners, pertaining to the envisioned strategies for supporting the role of the SGBs and improving their performance in South African schools. In addition, the suggestions for future research are also provided and the chapter culminates with the researcher's final reflections. This study falls under the discipline of Education Management, and deals with the issue of the SGBs and their role in enhancing the effectiveness of South African schools, which triggered this study.

Being mindful that empowering the SGBs is the responsibility of all the relevant stakeholders, the title of the study was framed as follows study: *The role of school governing bodies in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools*. This topic was developed to enable the researcher to explore the roles of the SGBs in promoting the effectiveness of South African schools, with a view to increase academic achievement. In addition, the topic was developed to derive at recommendations on how to raise awareness on school governance education to strengthen the role of the SGBs in South Africa and thereby enhance school effectiveness.

In formulating this topic, the overall aim was to investigate and explore the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools in South Africa's Western Cape Province, in a metropolitan area.

Joint and collaborative engagements on school governance education by the relevant stakeholders had been identified as one of the most effective strategies to be used to develop a positive school governance drive in South African schools. A critical reflection on the situation and subsequent role of the SGBs in contemporary South African schools revealed that there is very limited school governance knowledge among the teachers, learners, and parents. To this end, education on the importance of the SGBs can be a significant avenue for transmitting school governance

knowledge, values, skills, and positive attitudes that will vastly contribute to strengthening the role of the SGBs, which is much needed in South African schools. At the same time, intensive training will have to take place of the SGB members, so that they will be able to execute their intended functions to the best of their abilities. It will not serve any purpose to highlight the role of the SGBs, if the members lack the knowledge or the skills to execute this role, or if they do not support the concepts of transparency, accountability, ethics and integrity, commitment and dedication; or if they merely serve on the SGB to look after their own interests.

The primary purpose of this study was to bring to the fore the strategies and reasons for enhancing the role of the SGBs in South African schools. It was hypothesised that enhanced and enabled the SGBs would create the base for the provision of a sustainable quality education for learners in schools. Accordingly, the thrust of the study was on establishing the role of teachers, principals, parents, policy-makers, and school learners to deal with matters related to the operations and the mandate of the SGBs in South African schools.

The study was conducted in 10 South African schools in the Western Cape Province, in South Africa, in a metropolitan area. The studied South African schools (A-J) offer public secondary school education under the DoE. Purposive sampling was used to select the research sites and study participants, and a mixed methodology approach was used to explore participants' views on the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. Data for this study were collected by means of semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, questionnaires, and documentary analysis. The themes and sub-categories that emerged from the data analysis allowed the researcher to answer the research questions. The research questions for the study were designed to answer and contribute to knowledge and were as follows:

**Main question:** What is the role of school governing bodies in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools?

**Sub-Questions:**

1. In what ways do the school governing bodies in different school contexts strive to improve academic excellence in South African schools?

2. What are the contributing factors that still condone disparities among the school governing bodies in South Africa?
3. How can the Department of Basic Education further equip the school governing bodies in performing their governing role effectively?
4. What strategies are adopted by the SGBs to enhance effective school governance and management of resources to improve learner achievement in historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa?
5. Why is it important for the SGBs to adopt policies that will later translate into the implementation of good corporate governance in South African schools?

This section has provided an overview of the entire chapter. The conclusions to the study are provided in the next section.

## **7.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

Based on the findings of this study and as reported in the preceding chapter, many conclusions can be drawn, the principal one of which is that the SGBs in South Africa have a pivotal role to play in enhancing effectiveness in South African schools. The SGBs' core role is to ensure the implementation of the Act and the relevant policies in all schools and thus assure good governance, but equally important is their role in promoting the environment that guarantees delivery of quality education. This confirms Heystek's (2011) assertion that the SGBs' core function is to promote quality education at all costs. These important roles highlight the urgent need to strengthen, empower, and support the SGBs. The study further concludes that the failure to empower/enable, support and monitor the SGBs in South African schools has devastating consequences, among others, the worsening performance of the historically disadvantaged schools. Other studies conducted in the United States of America by the Iowa Association of School Boards (2011) support this view. The study concludes that stakeholders in South African schools are not adequately prepared and empowered to deal with school governance matters. Considering this, the study notes that staff development programmes being conducted in the South African schools are not comprehensive to meet the complexities and demands of an ever changing socio-economic and political environment. This calls for a review of all corporate governance issues in the education sector. This confirms the recommendations by ZACC (2017)



that a review of corporate governance issues is at the core of improving institutions, and the capacity to deliver and execute their constitutional and statutory mandates.

All participants in this study, including South African schools principals, senior teachers, and school learners, agreed that the SGBs are an important body and South African schools should support them fully. However, for this to happen, regular training and monitoring have to be put in place. This corroborates the findings and recommendations of the study that for school governance to be effective, there is a need to strengthen capacity building among relevant stakeholders. Results of the documentary analysis of the selected South African schools involved in the current study confirmed the fact that there is very limited evidence of any written/printed policy in schools regarding the role of the SGBs, which is supposed to put the statutory provisions into simpler pronouncements for guiding day-to-day operations at school level. It was evident from the study findings that there is no existing policy material available at the school level other than the SASA, particularly focusing on education and the importance of the SGBs in South Africa. These findings confirm the perennial challenges associated with school governance as highlighted in Khuzwayo and Chikoko's (2017) study which explored the relationships among key players in school governing boards.

Education on school governance, highlighting the importance of the role and functions of the SGBs, was regarded by all study participants as necessary, which needs to be incorporated into the compulsory training for all staff and stakeholders regarding the SGBs, and possibly even in the curricula offered in South African schools. There is need to develop appropriate school governance education as a mechanism for supporting the role of the SGBs and also assure the adherence to government's Acts and policies. Another conclusion drawn from the findings of this research is that the parents, current teaching staff, and administrators in South African schools, and particularly so in historically disadvantaged schools, do not have the appropriate knowledge regarding school governance issues related to the functions of the SGBs in their institutions. The lack of a shared vision governance in schools and the importance of the SGBs in South African schools emerged as one of the core sub-themes during the analysis of both the semi-structured interviews and focus group

interview data. Therefore, the findings tie in with Joubert and Bray's (2017) study which analysed public school governance dynamics in South Africa.

From these study findings, it is concluded that parents, principals, and teachers in South African schools need to be thoroughly prepared to build their capabilities to handle issues related to the SGBs.

Furthermore, the study concludes that, if the role of the SGBs is not supported, there are possibilities that the quality of service delivery in schools, particularly in historically disadvantaged schools, will be compromised. It also means that the SASA and other policies will have been promulgated without being fully implemented or adhered to, and no consequences accruing to those bodies or schools that fail to implement them – other than learners not receiving the quality educational environment they deserve. School governance education was considered by all participants as the only approach that would improve the current status quo. Thereafter, and once the SGB members and stakeholders have been trained and empowered, then an awareness campaign should be launched to raise the profile and importance of the SGBs. From the participants' responses it was apparent that collective engagement and multi-agency responses to the problem currently faced by the SGBs in executing their roles is required to strengthen their capacities to deal with any forms of school governance problems. Benchmarking against set goals and monitoring the performance against specific yardsticks is an essential and initial step to advance combined efforts to align the role of the SGBs with emerging best practices. To achieve this, it will be essential to engage key players such as school principals, senior teachers, parents, learners, and policy-makers in this critical process.

The next section presents the recommendations of the study, highlighting some of the expected roles and responsibilities for the stakeholders.

### **7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

In light of the study findings, the following specific recommendations are made to the school principals, teachers, school learners, parents, and policy-makers as key players in the South African education system.

### **7.3.1 Recommendations to the School Principals**

Findings from this research provided evidence that the intended role of the SGBs in South African schools needs to be fully understood by all stakeholders, the Act and policies implemented and the SGB supported in an effort to enhance academic achievement in these institutions. One of the main objectives of this study was to seek ways and strategies for enhancing the role of the SGBs in South African schools as part of a drive to improve the provision of quality of education in general. School principals were described by participants as the ‘game changers’, if South African schools are to realise a meaningful participation of the SGBs in education.

Various participants identified school principals as ‘vital cogs’ who are essential in their role as the most senior person in the school and thus a role model, to be seen to support the role of the SGBs. School principals are tactically located by virtue of their positions to facilitate the effective execution of roles by the SGBs in their schools. Principals exercise the management and administrative functions, which guarantee them the powers and privilege to influence all efforts geared towards supporting the role of the SGBs. It is, therefore, recommended that when proposals are offered to promote effectiveness of the SGBs in South Africa, school principals should be required to:

- a) Meaningfully contribute to the development of an appropriate school governance education, focusing on the importance of the SGBs in South African schools, which will be used as a strategy for supporting and recognising the role of the SGBs;
- b) Initiate the process of mainstreaming to incorporate governance content and concepts (ethics, integrity, transparency, accountability, honesty, commitment, and so forth) into existing life skill subject areas of the curriculum and introduce explanations about the role of the SGBs as a matter of urgency;
- c) Foster the review of vital documents such as the school’s vision and mission statements so that they reflect strategic intents for supporting and recognising the role of the SGBs and their mandate;
- d) Identify and provide capacity building and development activities, and the relevant resources required to introduce initiatives to strengthen the SGBs in their school, and enable them to take on an active role in the implementation of the Act and the policies in the school;

- e) Create opportunities for staff development and education/training on the functions/mandate of the SGBs;
- f) Develop school governance strategies and mechanisms for the school and community engagement on the role of the SGBs in South African schools and how they must be supported; and
- g) Create a collaborative and multi-stakeholder/agency approach in supporting the of the SGBs in the school and facilitate those teachers who will be serving as members of the SGB to undergo in-service training to prepare them for managing and interacting with the SGBs in an effective manner.

### **7.3.2 Recommendations to Teachers in South Africa**

A crucial sub-category that emerged from the data analysis was that South African teachers are the critical element who directly interact with the SGBs as they execute their duties in various schools in South Africa. One of the primary roles of teachers would be to implement the policies set by the SGBs through the principal's office. Thus, it would be critical for teachers to develop perspective-taking attitudes so that school governance matters are positively attended to at all times. It will not be possible to have effective the SGBs, if teachers (or principals) do not have access to the Act or the policies, do not understand the implications of the rules, do not implement them or are not adhering to the governance rules, and are sabotaging the effectiveness of the SGBs, hence the need for appropriate attributes and the subsequent development of a positive school governance culture. Above all, senior teachers as significant contributors, need to acquire the relevant knowledge regarding school governance to be able to deal with issues pertaining to the importance of the SGBs. Accordingly, it is recommended that for the role of the SGBs to be realised and supported in South African schools, senior teachers will have to:

- a) Contribute meaningfully to the introduction of a suitable education curricula for South African schools, which will be used as a strategy for enhancing learners' academic achievement and which will support the efforts of the SGBs in assuring governance in all school matters;
- b) Review existing curricula offered in South African schools to initiate programmes for education on the role and mandate of the SGBs;

- c) Extensively and intensively collaborate across departments and at inter-school levels to disseminate education on the role and mandate of the SGBs;
- d) Undertake relevant research studies on the benefits of supporting the role and mandate of the SGBs;
- e) Assist with, take part in, and support staff development training to enhance teachers' competencies in educating learners on governance matters and the role and mandate of the SGBs, and also to enhance own capabilities to be able to competently serve as members of the SGBs;
- f) Employ their professional and technical knowledge and skills to advocate for the introduction of capacitation of the SGBs in South African schools; and
- g) Lead by example and model ideal school governance conduct/behaviour in and outside the school premises as advocated by the SGBs.

### **7.3.3 Recommendations to Learners in South African Schools**

School learners as the primary beneficiaries of the teaching and learning processes in South African schools have an instrumental role to play in school governance. The goals of the SGB initiatives in South Africa are meant to promote the holistic welfare of learners in schools. If the SGBs are not strengthened, the learners are likely to experience the negative consequences of poor governance and no attention being given to the improvement of academic performance or quality education. School learners are the ultimate beneficiaries of all efforts by the SGBs in schools. Against this backdrop, the following recommendations are made to the learners in South African schools:

- a) Meaningfully contribute to any input regarding governance in schools (ethics, integrity, transparency, honesty, accountability, responsibility, commitment, and dedication), striving for excellence and insisting on receiving the best quality education from all teachers all the time, which is in line with what the SGBs are meant to achieve for South African schools;
- b) Incorporate the knowledge, skills and values of “ubuntu” that will empower learners to be able to contribute meaningfully towards fulfilling the expectations of the SGBs in their schools;
- c) Cascade and disseminate school governance information and education on the importance of the SGBs in the immediate school communities and to parents;

- d) Use the opportunity of having a successful the SGB to ensure that the school uses capable teachers, committed and dedicated teachers, the appropriate educational materials and infrastructure; and
- e) Actively collaborate with other related institutions' learners to promote the role and mandate of the SGBs in the drive for achieving improved quality education for all of South Africa's learners.

#### **7.3.4 Recommendations to Policy-Makers**

Findings from this research have provided evidence that the role of the SGBs in enhancing the effectiveness of governance and education in South African schools needs to be strengthened/supported to enhance the provision of quality education in these institutions. One of the main objectives of this study was to seek ways and strategies on how the roles and mandates of the SGBs can be enhanced to increase the academic achievement in all schools, but particularly in historically disadvantaged schools that seem to be lagging behind in many instances. This endeavour requires the full backing by all relevant stakeholders in the South African education system. The Department of Education in South Africa is the 'hub' of all initiatives that can transform the operations of the SGBs across schools. The Department has both the constitutional and statutory powers to facilitate and empower the effectiveness of the SGBs in executing their mandate, as the Education Department exercises the oversight, administrative duties, and the powers to influence all efforts that are meant for strengthening/supporting the SGBs. It is therefore recommended that when proposals are made to enhance the effectiveness of the SGBs in South African schools, the Education Department would be required to:

- a) Re-assess the full SASA and the various policies designed to ensure governance in schools and an improvement in academic performance of schools through the introduction of the SGBs at schools as to whether the SASA and the policies have achieved what they meant to achieve, whether the SGBs have been successfully introduced at all schools and whether these are fully functional;
- b) Make an appraisal of existing vision and mission statements for the DoE to guarantee that they explicitly reflect school governance initiatives and the instrumental role played by the SGBs;

- c) Petition and persuade government to intensify an outreach campaign targeting education stakeholders to disseminate information on the role and mandate of the SGBs in South African schools, and what they are trying to achieve together with the DoE;
- d) Provide structures and processes that support the existence and full operation of the SGBs in South African schools, including instituting mechanisms such as systems and process reviews, and monitoring structures to align the current roles of the SGBs with best practices;
- e) Establish training programmes on all aspects of good governance, financial management, applicable laws regarding the SGBs' functions, and basic school management to be structured and implemented for all stakeholders involved with the SGBs;
- f) Contribute to the planning and designing of an appropriate curriculum, which promotes education on the role and mandate of the SGBs in South African schools which will be used as a school governance strategy for building and sustaining effective schools in South Africa;

### **7.3.5 Recommendations for parents in South Africa**

Musaazi (2016:38) argues that the school is for the community and the community is for the school. Accordingly, parents are important and hence, their participation in the SGBs signifies their involvement in the school's stake at policy level as much as it shows their willingness to give back to the community as an appreciation for what their children are offered at school. Parents can directly and indirectly influence the operations of the SGBs in various cultural environments in the South African context, and as such, parents are critical stakeholders in enhancing (or sabotaging) the role of the SGBs and thereby the effectiveness of the school and the education of their children. Against this background, the following recommendations are proposed to parents with children attending school in South African schools:

- a) Meaningfully contribute to the development of an appropriate home-based teaching of governance values (integrity, ethics, honesty, responsibility, accountability, commitment, and dedication, and so forth) that complements and augments the role of the SGBs in South African schools;

- b) Inculcate knowledge, skills and values of ubuntu/hunhu among the school learners that will enable them to develop attributes of honesty and transparency, which are a prerequisite for supporting the role of the SGBs;
- c) Deliver home-based socio-cultural and religious education with values for supporting the role of the SGBs, get involved with the education of their children, see where they go wrong in behaviour, actions and scholastic application;
- d) Collaborate and network with parents and the SGBs from other schools to look for possible improvements;
- e) Assist other parents, if needed, regarding the role and mandate of the SGBs, communicate with teachers and the SGB if there are areas of concern, and try to assist with solutions; and
- f) Support the role and mandate of the SGB as much as see that the SGB performs in its role and mandate.
- g) Most importantly, exchange programmes are recommended. These programmes may be supported among various schools. These exchange programmes may happen with schools within South Africa, the Southern African region, the African continent and beyond. The nature of exchange programmes may therefore vary on intensity from institution to institution, though the trends and key aspects of governance will be identified to be universal in nature. Such exchange programmes should try to undertake research on key aspects of school governance in line with best practices. In addition, the members of the SGBs across the country may embark on formal visits to established the SGBs within their clusters and learn from real-life experiences. Such visits may further develop a 'culture' of cross pollination of ideas that may in turn lead to promoting or recognising the role of the SGBs in general.

This section has explored the recommendations related to the actual implementation of policies that govern the SGBs to all relevant stakeholders. The next section presents the contributions of the study and the model designed from the study findings.



## **7.4 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **7.4.1 Two-Tier Integrated Results-Based School Governance Model**

From the empirical findings of the study, the researcher developed an implementation model, which is a diagrammatic representation of how the implementation of the two-tier integrated results-based school governance model (TT-IRBSGM) at the ministerial, provincial, district, and school levels could strengthen the roles of the SGBs, and consequently, increase the effectiveness of South African schools.

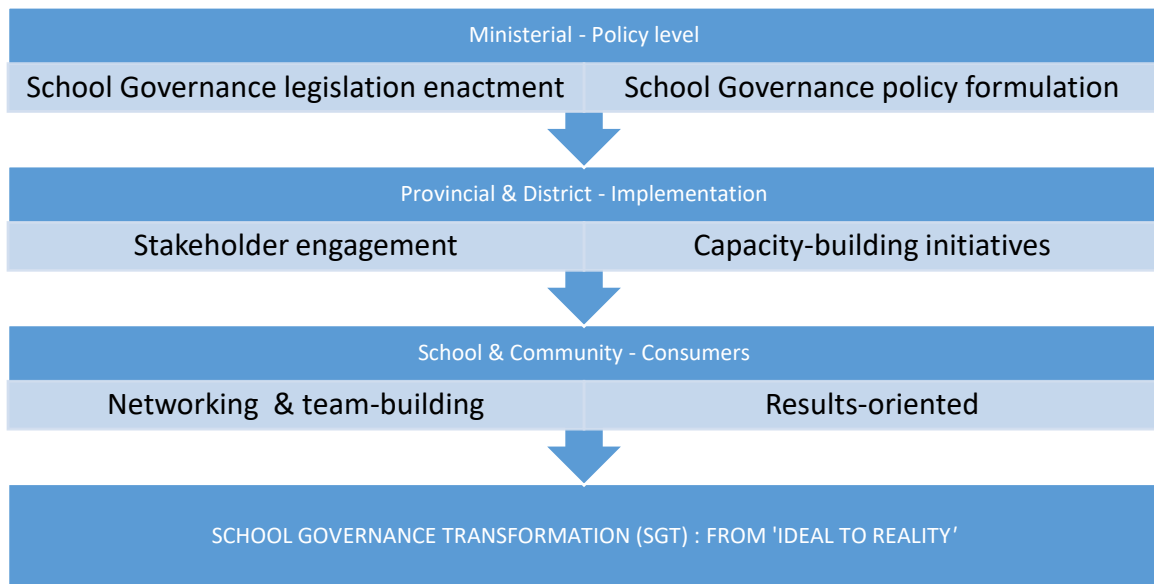
The model summarises the policy imperatives, anticipated interventions, and the critical processes required to produce desired results. It represents the researcher's conceptions of how to address the systemic weaknesses and challenges in the governance and management of schools. It seeks to act as a guide for stakeholders on how to initiate and strengthen a collaborative, collective and broad-based approach in the execution of the SGBs' statutory functions. At the initial phase, the model comprises three critical levels: ministerial/provincial/district, the schools, and the community.

At each level, the key tasks that must be addressed or met at that level are suggested. It is assumed that the concerted efforts of the stakeholders at all the levels would culminate in the desired results; namely, enhancing the governance and management of schools, which would in turn lead to improved school effectiveness, and learner achievement. Such transformations would act as a threshold for the next and second phase.

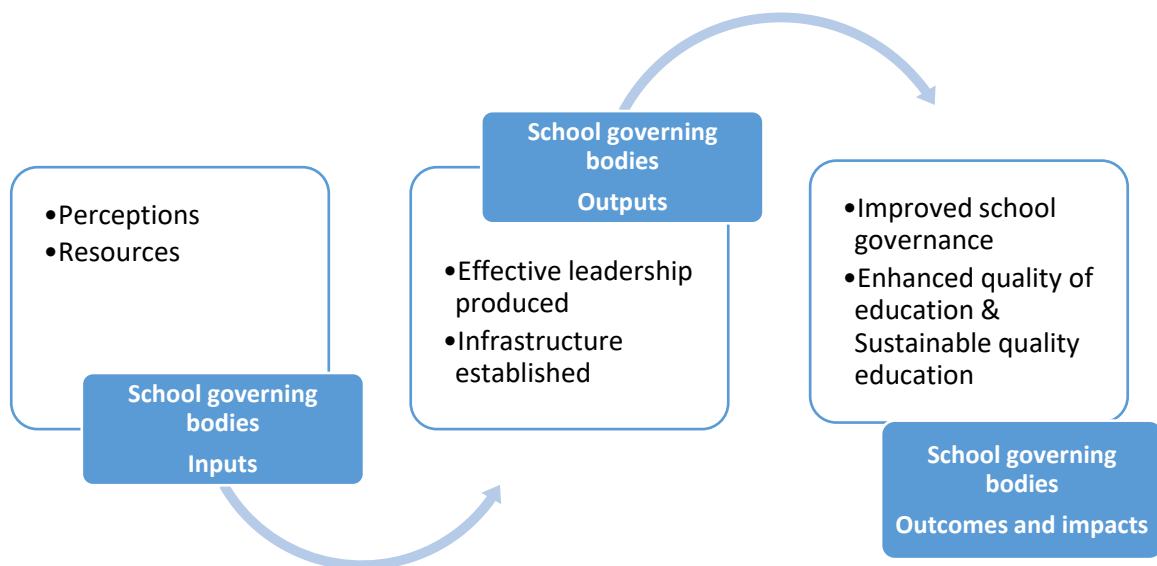
The second phase focuses on the value-chain networks, initiatives and interventions. These interactions could enhance commitment, and collaboration among the stakeholders involved in school governance and management and improve the quality of education in schools. The model could improve collaboration in school governance initiatives, if implemented effectively.

#### **7.4.1.1 Model for TT-IRBSGM implementation**

##### **Tier 1: First Phase- Policy**



## Tier 2: Second Phase-Implementation



**Figure 7.1 Model for TT-IRBSGM implementation**

### 7.4.1.2 An explanation of the model

The above model identifies some issues to be taken into consideration in an effort to strengthen and enhance the role of the SGBs. The principals in schools have to be knowledgeable of the value-chain process. This is consistent with the functionalist

theory propounded by Parsons (1949) that the interdependence among different parts in society is critical for the survival of the system. Thus, both the first and second levels (phases) of the model provide mechanisms for close interaction and interdependence. The principals need to be proactive in utilising the critical elements within both phases. For example, introducing capacity-building workshops can be an effective strategy for dealing with the identified constraints and shortcomings of the SGB members. At policy and implementation levels, the problems that arise within schools can be dealt with through the interventions put in place by the SGBs. However, the model proposes that whatever solutions are put in place, the focus should be on tangible and measurable results, which will generate the desired outcomes for schools, and which will thus have a positive impact on society. The model advocates that the SGBs' role in enhancing school effectiveness should not be perceived in isolation, if their initiatives and contribution to schools are to be meaningful. The model proposes that there should be healthy relations, interactions, and collaboration between different levels of the DBE, that is, the national, provincial, district, circuit, and school levels. Healthy relations and strong interactions between these levels seem to be lacking; hence, the model advocating more interaction is proposed.

The multi-stakeholder response to all the constraints faced by the SGBs in executing their mandate is imperative; hence, principals must be proactive and strategic in initiating the interactions in order to enhance the efficiency of the SGBs. Instead of possibly believing the SGBs to be “a threat” to their autonomy and “interfering with the running of the school”, principals should ensure that the mechanisms needed to improve the capacities of the SGBs are in place, so that they can be effective in their work and improve the effectiveness of schools in collaboration with the principle/the school management. Principals have the opportunity and should see it as their role/task to ensure that there is unity and teamwork among the SGB members and other stakeholders, so that they can achieve their educational goals.

The next section presents the suggestions for future research.

## **7.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

In South Africa, not much research has been conducted specifically targeting strategies for enhancing the role of the SGBs to improve the academic performance

of learners in South African schools. Education on school governance is not a popular subject across schools, colleges, and universities (Transparency International, 2016:18; UNDP, 2011:9). Therefore, there is lack of research studies on school governance issues, and particularly on strategies applied to enhance the role and mandate of the SGBs in South African schools.

To this end, it is proposed that school governance matters must be studied in a more comprehensive framework that incorporates the development of good corporate governance across institutions. This will in turn provide an opportunity for academics and policy-makers to appreciate and recognise the role of the SGBs in their daily setting, the constraints they face and the shortcomings in policy structures, implementation, and monitoring.

For the current study, the choice of the South African schools that acted as a representative sample regarding the concern around the SGBs was justified. The selected schools were in different administration districts and were exposed to different socio-economic factors as well as to different SGB environments. This enabled the researcher to establish informed findings of the differing conditions/situations in relation to strategies at the South African schools' disposal in supporting the role of the SGBs.

Based on the findings from this study, three main areas for further research are suggested. First, it is suggested that similar studies need to be undertaken in other South African schools in different geographic provinces of South Africa to establish mechanisms and strategies to be adopted on the role and mandate of the SGBs in South African schools. It is also vital to conduct additional research studies that provide more evidence on the role of the SGBs in private schools in South Africa.

A second area that requires further study is on curriculum development and policy-making regarding education on school governance according to the mandate of the SGBs. Further research studies are required to explore the critical role policy-makers may play in advancing efforts aimed at enhancing the role of the SGBs through continued policy reviews and pronouncements at national level.

Third, future research needs to focus on the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders on the effectiveness/utility of the SGBs in their respective environments.

This section has presented suggestions for consideration when undertaking future research. The following section focuses on the researcher's final reflections.

## **7.6 FINAL REFLECTIONS**

The primary purpose of this study was to bring to the fore the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools. It was assumed that the participants' viewpoints on the role of the SGBs and evidence from a documentary analysis would assist the researcher to answer the research questions raised in Chapter 1. Through the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and documentary analysis, the findings were generated that assisted the researcher to explain the role of the SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools.

The results of this study provided convincing evidence that the SGBs in South African schools have an important role in enhancing school effectiveness, although many of them are constrained by capacity/skills and other factors, which need to be addressed urgently through the school governance educative process. It was established that the SGBs in South African schools were the most suitable structures for instilling and enhancing the ideals of the education system.

Findings from this study have demonstrated that education of all relevant stakeholders regarding the functions of the SGBs is a necessity. Parents, teachers, principals, and learners must be given the opportunity to be exposed to the 'how and why' concerns of regarding the role of the SGBs in general and specifically, how the SGBs can and should contribute towards the improvement of academic achievement being possible at all schools. Therefore, the benchmarking of the implementation of the SASA and the various policies at every school, as well as the successful establishment of fully functional SGBs at every school, implementing and supervising the implementation of the required governance and the aligned best practices remains the ultimate solution, together with on-going education of stakeholders regarding the requirements for members of the SGBs.

A critical reflection on the constraints and opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of the SGBs in South African schools reveals that a collaborative, multi-stakeholder/agency engagement is required. This cooperative engagement will

provide a new dispensation for initiating a more robust and strengthened approach in supporting or recognising the role of the SGBs. Collaborative commitment, capacity-building and development will enable South African schools to successfully achieve the ideals of quality education. Therefore, the findings from this research study can guide and inform school principals, policy-makers, and parents on how to devise practical and user-friendly strategies for supporting the role of the SGBs in South African schools.

This study is significant to academics and scholars as it contributes to the scholarly literature on how the role of the SGBs can be supported to enhance effectiveness in South African schools, thereby contributing to sustainable academic achievement. Above all, novel themes and new insights reflecting global experiences and best practices emerged from the data analysis and could inform the overall discourse on the role of the SGBs in South African schools. It was also important as an input for policy-makers and the education sector that “training the trainer”, educating the teachers and other relevant stakeholders, will make a difference to having capacitated individuals and team taking on the task of transforming the South African education sector. It will only be achievable if collaboration and support of all affected and involved parties are achieved. Only then can corruption and self-interest be eliminated, disparities between poorer and richer schools be reduced and academic excellence be achieved.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS/SENIOR TEACHERS**

#### **1. Background information**

- (a) Academic qualifications
- (b) Professional qualifications
- (c) Teaching experience

#### **2. Conceptualisations of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**

How would you define the following concepts?

- a) School Governing Bodies (SGBs)
- b) SASA

#### **3. In your view, what do you think is a School Governing Bodies (SGBs) 'supportive environment'?**

#### **4. The education system and School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**

- a) Are School Governing Bodies (SGBs) necessary in the existing education system in the country?
- b) According to you, what is the importance of establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?

#### **5. Role of teachers in School Governing Bodies (SGBs) initiatives**

- a) In your experience, what do you think are the roles of teachers in School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?
- b) What support mechanisms do teachers need in order to be motivated to become part of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?
- c) What community projects and programmes do you think teachers can undertake in order to promote effectiveness of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?

#### **6. Establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South African education sector**

- a) Using your experience, can you explain whether it is important to introduce School Governing Bodies (SGBs) education in South African schools?



- b) What roles do you think policy-makers and programme-makers can play in advocating for School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South African schools?
- c) Can you suggest ways in which School Governing Bodies (SGBs) education can be operationalised in South African schools?

## **7. Establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs): goals and themes**

- a) If you and your school were to establish School Governing Bodies (SGBs), what would be your main goals?
- b) Which themes would you like to be included in establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?

## **8. Importance of establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to the South African society**

- a) How do you describe the situation of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa?
- b) Is it possible to educate learners in an environment where there are no School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?
- c) What do you think is the importance of establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to South Africa as a country?
- d) How should programmes for establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) be designed in order to meet the South African context?
- e) In your view, how does establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) enhance learner academic achievement?

## **9. Establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) / and the education pedagogy**

- (a) What teaching strategies could be adopted to promote School Governing Bodies (SGBs) education in South African schools?
- (b) How can School Governing Bodies (SGBs) education be integrated in the teaching and learning process?

## **10. Challenges in implementing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) programmes in South African schools**

- (a) Can you describe local and national challenges that can inhibit the establishment of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa?

## **11. Possibilities for improvement on School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South African schools**

- (a) How do you foresee the possibilities for introducing improvements in School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa?

- (b) What local and national issues can facilitate the improvement of concept of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa?
- (c) Is there any relevant additional information that you want to share?

Thank you.

## **APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS FOR PARENTS**

### **1. Background information**

- (a) Academic qualifications
- (b) Professional qualifications
- (c) Experience in dealing with school

### **2. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in schools**

- (a) Are there incidences where SGBs have assisted in mobilising resources for use by teachers and principals?

### **3. In your view, what do you think is a School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are necessary?**

### **4. The school system and School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**

- a) Are schools prepared to be governed by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in providing education to the nation?
- b) According to you, what is the importance of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in schools?

### **5. Role of parents in establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**

- a) In your experience, what do you think are the roles of parents in establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?
- b) What support mechanisms do school need in order to be motivated to work under directives of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?
- c) What community projects and programmes do you think parents can undertake in order to promote effectiveness of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?

### **6. Establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South African education sector**

- a) Using your experience, can you explain whether it is important to have School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South African education system?
- b) Can you suggest ways in which the concept of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) can be implemented in South African education system?

### **7. Establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs): goals and themes**

- a) If you and your school were to develop a model for establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs), what would be your main goals?

- b) Which themes would you like to be included in the model for establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?

**8. Importance of establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to the South African schools**

- a) How do you describe the situation of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South African public schools?
- b) Is it possible to educate children/learners to learn in an environment where there are no School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?
- c) What do you think is the importance of establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to South Africa as a country?
- d) In your view, how does establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) enhance learner academic achievement?

**9. Challenges in establishing School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South African secondary schools**

- a) Can you describe local and national challenges that can inhibit the effective establishing of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa?
- b) Is there any relevant additional information that you want to share?

Thank you.

## **APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FINAL YEAR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS**

### **1. Background information**

- a) Type of secondary school education programme
- b) Subjects done

### **2. Conceptualisations of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**

- a) When you enter your secondary school premises, what features or aspects of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) can you easily identify?
- b) Can you define a School Governing Bodies (SGBs)-promoting environment?
- c) What does the Concept School Governing Bodies (SGBs) mean to you?

### **3. The school system and School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**

- a) To what extent are you involved (as learners) in the interaction with SGBs?
- b) Is quality of education being offered in this school promoted by establishment or existence of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?
- c) Can you identify and describe programmes in your school being undertaken by School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?
- d) According to you, what is the importance of promoting new programmes offered by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in education?
- e) In your view, how does School Governing Bodies (SGBs) affect your academic achievement?

### **4. Role of teachers in School Governing Bodies (SGBs) initiatives.**

What roles do you think teachers should play in supporting School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?

### **5. What projects and programmes can teachers embark on in order to promote the establishing of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in schools and communities?**

### **6. In your view, what do you think are the attributes of an effective School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

### **7. Perceptions on School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**

- a) What do you think is the importance of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) to South Africa as a country?

- b) In what ways can School Governing Bodies (SGBs) contribute to the creation of quality education in South Africa?
- c) Is there any relevant additional information that you want to share?

Thank you.

## APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS/PRINCIPALS

### Preliminaries

*Hello, my name is Alice King. I am a Doctor of Education learner with the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am conducting a survey in fulfilment of my doctorate programme. I am gathering data on selected sites in the Western Cape Education Department, South Africa. The survey seeks to understand, among other things, the extent to which participants are aware of the role of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) with specific regard to support teaching and learning and enhancing learner achievement. Every answer of is completely confidential. You will not be asked to reveal any names of individuals.*

### IDENTIFICATION

Name of person administering	
Date of administering questionnaire	
Place / Name of institution	
Province	
Town	
Educational District	

### DEMOGRAPHICS

<b>a. Sex of participant</b>	Male	Female	
<b>b. Locality</b>	Rural	Urban	
<b>c. Date of birth</b>	Month:	Day:	Year:
<b>d. Highest educational qualification</b>	Matric (grade 12)		
	Vocational training		
	National Diploma		
	Degree	Name of degree programme	
	Masters	Name of degree programme...	
	PhD		
<b>e. Employment status</b>	Employed by government	Employed by SGB/SGB	Relief Teacher

**AWARENESS AND MEANING OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBs)**  
**ISSUES**

- **Do you understand what School Governing Bodies (SGBs) means?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

If yes how would you define School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?

.....

**Are you aware of any problems related to establishment of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

If yes, can you provide at least two examples of the problems you are aware of?

.....

**Are you aware of any similar national structures like School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

If yes, can you provide at least two examples of such national structures

.....

**Do you believe that School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in South Africa is effective or it is ineffective?**

Effective 1

Ineffective 2

No answer 3

Can you explain your answer?

.....



**Are you aware of any South African laws and policies that support establishment and existence of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

If yes, can you state some of the laws and policies you are aware of?

.....

- **Are you aware of the institutions that work to support School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

If yes, can you state the institutions and organisations

.....

- **Of the following functions of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) which one is most common to you?**

Function	Common or not common (indicate by ticking)	On a scale of 1–5, where 1 is not very important at all and 5 is a very important. How would you rate the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) functions you identified?
Policy formulation		
Policy implementation (e.g.)		

### **IMPACT OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBS)**

- **Generally, do you think that School Governing Bodies (SGBs) affect positively on learners' academic life?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

Can you explain your answer?

.....

***School Governing Bodies (SGBs) impact differently on people, on a scale of 1–5, where 1 is little positive impact and 5 is a very positive impacts how you would rate the following impacts of School Governing Bodies (SGBs).***

Tick the appropriate box	1	2	3	4	5
School Governing Bodies (SGBs) affects the quality of education					
School Governing Bodies (SGBs) rewards the underprivileged learners					
School Governing Bodies (SGBs) promotes principles of achievement on merit					
School Governing Bodies (SGBs) supports the fair grading of learners					
School Governing Bodies (SGBs) promotes the learners' access to basic services.					

- **Have you personally been pleased by establishment School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

If yes, can you explain how School Governing Bodies (SGBs) have pleased you?

.....

### **DETERMINANTS & MANIFESTATIONS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBs)**

- **Can you identify some determinants or factors that encourage the establishment of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)? Rate the level of influence using the percentage indexes provided.**

Determinants /Causal factors	10%	30%	50%	80%	100%
Need for increasing transparency and accountability in management of schools (e.g.)					

- **What can you suggest as the reason for institutions' and organisations' failure to recognise importance of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)? Rate the reason you have provided.**

Reasons for recognition failure	10%	30%	50%	80%	100%
Negative attitudes					
Lack of supportive environment					
Lack of knowledge on parameters of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)					
Lack of visibility of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)					

### **CONSTRAINTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBS).**

- **What are the constraints associated with the existence/establishment of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in schools?**

Absence of a School Governing Bodies (SGBs) national policy 1

A culture of denial 2

Lack of political commitment to support School Governing Bodies (SGBs) 3

Limited scope of definition of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) 4

- **How effective do you think government's actions are in supporting School Governing Bodies (SGBs)? (select only one answer)**

Very effective 1

Effective 2

Ineffective 3

Very ineffective 4

No answer 5

**Rank the following sectors according to the level of support they give to School Governing Bodies (SGBs). On a scale of 1–5, where 1 is no support at all and 5 is a very supportive how you would rank the following institutions.**

Tick the appropriate box	1	2	3	4	5
The Education sector					
Judiciary					
Medical and health sector					
The Police					
Higher and Tertiary education					
Mining sector					
Lands and resettlement					

- **Which educational institution has the most benefit from SGB officials and systems?**

Early childhood Development 1

Primary 2

Secondary 3

Teachers' college 4

Polytechnic college 5

Vocational training college 6

Agricultural training Institutes 7

Universities 8

Can you suggest reasons for your answer?

.....

### **STRATEGIES THAT ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBS)**

- **Have you ever received any training on issues related to School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

If yes, state when and where you were trained and identify aspect of development and name the organisation that trained you?

.....

- **Would you be willing to receive any training on management of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

If yes, on which area or aspect

.....

- **Do you think it is necessary for schools and colleges to introduce courses to the learners on relevance of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

- **What would you propose as the course content for the training? Indicate the level of importance**

Proposed course content	Main course	Optional course
Basics on School Governing Bodies (SGBs) management strategies		
Ethics and integrity in SGBs		
Good corporate governance in SGBs		

- **What would you propose as some of the solutions to the problem associated with School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

.....

### **SUPPORTING SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBS).**

- **Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
Learners in schools can make a difference in their life as a result of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) initiatives (examples)					
Establishment of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) results in loss of trust and confidence in schools					
School Governing Bodies (SGBs) have negative effects on results-based performance management systems					

- **Which strategy would you use in order to help in the School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

.....

- **Do private and state schools experience the same conditions in dealing with School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

Support your answer

.....

### **PERCEPTIONS ON EFFECT OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES (SGBS)**

- **Whose role is it to support School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in schools?**

Principals/Headmaster/Headmistress 1

Teachers/lecturers/Tutors 2

Learners/learners/learners 3

Parents 4

Nobody's role 5

Everyone's/Collective role 6

State the reason for your response

.....

- **Have you ever interacted with the School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?**

YES 1

NO 2

NO ANSWER 3

- **Indicate which educational mode you would use in order to champion a robust campaign for supporting School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and showcasing its role.**

Mode of public education	Tick	Comment
Workshops and seminars		
Exhibitions and commemorations		
Road shows and road block campaigns		
Radio presentations		
Television presentation		
Newspapers, press reports, journals and annual reports		
Website		
Face book		
Institutional visits and round table discussions		

**The End**

## **APPENDIX E: DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS GUIDE**

### **1) Schools mission statement and vision**

- a) What values, skills, and outcomes are identified in the school mission statement?
- b) What values, skills, and outcomes are identified in the school vision?
- c) In what ways do the school statement and vision reflect the existence of School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?

### **2) School curriculum objectives**

- a) When was the curriculum developed?
- b) What is the target group?
- c) What are the aims and the objectives of the school curriculum?

### **3) School curriculum content.**

- a) How is the school curriculum organised?
- b) What content is offered in the school curriculum?
- c) Are there elements of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in the school curriculum?

### **4) Pedagogical issues.**

- a) What methods of teaching are suggested in the school curriculum?
- b) Do the suggested teaching methods reflect approaches which involve and encourage active learner participation?
- c) How do these teaching methods facilitate relate to School Governing Bodies (SGBs)?

### **5) Corporate governance issues**

- a) Do systems and audit reports reflect evidence of regulatory initiatives by SGBs?
- b) Do minutes of annual general meetings reflect the existence of SGBs in monitoring key aspects of transparency and accountability in management of school resources?

### **13. Assessment procedures.**

How are schools and learners assessed in schools?

- 14. In what ways do these assessment procedures recognise the role of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in education?

## **APPENDIX F: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN WESTERN CAPE SCHOOLS**

Dr Audrey Wyngaard  
Directorate Research  
WCED  
Golden Acre 19<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 19-03  
Cape Town  
Tel: (021) 467 9272

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN WESTERN CAPE SCHOOLS**

Dear Dr Wyngaard,

My name is Alice A.K. King and I am a PhD candidate in Educational Management at the University of South Africa. The research I wish to conduct for my Doctoral thesis involves **“The role of school governing bodies in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools.”** This project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor M. Lekhetho (UNISA, South Africa). Professor M. Lekhetho can be reached at (012) 429 – (o/h) for any questions regarding this study.

I am hereby seeking your consent to approach, observe and interview a number of public schools in the Western Cape Province to provide participants for this project. My request includes permission to access the following:

- For a more reliable results, the researcher will target selected schools (quintiles 1, 3, and 5) in the Western Cape region;
- Minutes of meetings and archived reports from working committees regarding the efforts and support of the SGBs in enhancing learner achievement;
- Data regarding schools’ election of SGBs and training that has been provided thus far;
- Information regarding the progress made by SGBs since the inception of democratic governance in South Africa.



I have provided you with a copy of my thesis proposal, which includes copies of the measure and consent and assent forms to be used in the research process. I am also awaiting the approval letter, which I hope to receive from the UNISA Research Ethics Committee (CEDU).

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide the Department of Education with bound copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 073 0669 024 and/or [aking587@gmail.com](mailto:aking587@gmail.com). Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A.A.K. King

Alice A.K. King (Mrs)

PhD Candidate

College of Education: Education Management and Leadership

University of South Africa

Pretoria 0003

November 14, 2016

## **APPENDIX G: RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER**

[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)

tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

**REFERENCE:** 20161215 –7048

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Alice King

8 Troy Close

Phoenix

Milnerton

7441

**Dear Mrs Alice King**

### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN ENHANCING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS.**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, teachers and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, teachers, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.

4. Teachers' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **16 January 2017 till 30 September 2017.**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalising syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T. Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services**  
**Western Cape Education Department**  
**Private Bag X9114**  
**CAPE TOWN**  
**8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 20 May 2017**

## APPENDIX H: DECLARATION BY THE EDITOR

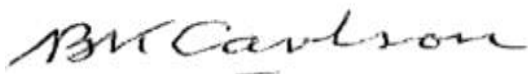
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Nahoon Valley  
East London  
5241

23 April 2019

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that I have proofread and edited the following thesis using the Windows 'Tracking' system to reflect my comments and suggested corrections for the student to action:

*The role of school governing bodies in enhancing school effectiveness in South African schools* by ALICE AYANDA KAYAKAZI KING, submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in EDUCATION MANAGEMENT in the COLLEGE OF EDUCATION at the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA.



Brian Carlson (B.A., M.Ed.)

Professional Editor

Email: [bcarlson521@gmail.com](mailto:bcarlson521@gmail.com)

Cell: 0834596647

**Disclaimer:** Although I have made comments and suggested corrections, the responsibility for the quality of the final document lies with the student in the first instance and not with myself as the editor.

BK & AJ Carlson Professional Editing Services

## APPENDIX I: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2017/07/12

Dear Mrs King,

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2017/07/12 to 2022/06/14

Ref#: **2017/07/12/5629594/39/MC**

Name: Mrs AAK King

Student#: 5629594

#### Researcher:

Name: Mrs AAK King

Email: aking587@gmail.com

Telephone#: 0730669024

#### Supervisor:

Name: Prof M Lekhetho

Email: lekhem@unisa.ac.za

Telephone#: 0124293781

#### Title of research:

**The role of School Governing Bodies in enhancing the effectiveness of schools in South Africa**

**Qualification:** D Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2017/07/12 to 2022/07/12.

*The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2017/07/12 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2022/07/12. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

**Note:**

The reference number **2017/07/12/5629594/39/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

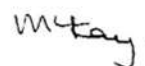
Kind regards,



**Dr M Claassens**

**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**

[mcdtc@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcdtc@netactive.co.za)



**Prof V McKay**

**EXECUTIVE DEAN**

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa  
 P.O. Box 192, Midrand, City of Johannesburg  
 Telephone: +27 12 429 4111 Fax: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

## APPENDIX J: RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM



### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS 2017 APPLICATION FORM

#### DUE DATES FOR **SUBMISSION** OF APPLICATIONS 2017

(Applications received after the closing date will stand over to the next CEDU REC review meeting)

25 Jan	22 Feb	29 March	26 April	31 May
28 June	26 July	30 Aug	27 Sept	25 Oct

#### RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW MEETING DATES FOR 2017

15 Feb	15 March	12 April	17 May	14 June
12 July	16 Aug	13 Sept	18 Oct	15 Nov

Master's and doctoral students, who have any questions or require assistance with the completion of this form, should please contact their supervisors. Staff members who need guidance with the completion of this application form should contact Dr M Claassens at [mcdtc@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcdtc@netactive.co.za)

**This application form must be completed after reading the UNISA policy on Research Ethics.** Students should request the policy or the link from their supervisors. **PLEASE STUDY THE DOCUMENT, "GUIDELINES AND EXAMPLES FOR CEDU REC APPLICATION (2017)" BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM.** If your supervisor did not provide you with these guidelines and examples, request them *before* completing the form.

1. This template [©2017] is the official application form that must be used by both staff and students of the College of Education to apply for research ethics clearance directly involving humans. **A new application made on previous versions of the template cannot be accepted and will be returned to the applicant.**
2. Please note that the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics DOES NOT APPLY RETROSPECTIVELY. If data collection has already commenced, or is in progress, the CEDU REC will not consider the application.
3. The application must be submitted as **ONE** document. **Do not submit separate attachments as the application will be returned to you.**
4. The CEDU REC will evaluate the ethical soundness of each application. Ethical soundness relates to scientific

## **APPENDIX K: A LETTER REQUESTING AN ADULT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW**

Dear SGB Member,

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Alice A. K. King, am conducting as part of my research as a doctoral learner entitled “the role of SGBs in enhancing school effectiveness in SA schools” at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by the Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of SGBs in education is substantial and well documented. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve the policy and practices regarding the SGBs in schools.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 30 - 45 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 12 months in my locked office. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.



If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 073 066 9024 or by e-mail at aking587@gmil.com.

I look forward to speaking with you very much and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows on page 2.

Yours sincerely

**Alice A. K. King (PhD candidate, UNISA)**

\*\*\*\*\*

## **CONSENT FORM**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study <...> in education. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print):

Participant Signature:

Researcher Name: (Please print)

Researcher Signature:

Date:

## APPENDIX L: TURNITIN REPORT

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BY AAK KING

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